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THE

Manockji Limji Gold Medal Essay,

1891.

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NANA PHADNAVIS.

BY

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"In the world's broad field of battle,
In the bivouac of life,
Be not like dumb driven cattle,
Be a hero in the strife."

— LONGFELLOW.

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NANA PHADNAVIS.

Balaji Janardhan, the great Maratha statesman of the last century, better known in the History of India as Nana Phadnavis, was born in the month of May, 1741, in the city of Satara. He belonged to the illustrious house of the Bhanus, who held in heredity the responsible post of Phadnavis.[1] His mother Rukhmabai traced her descent from the ancient and noble family of Mehendhale. Nana's ancestor Mahadji Pant Bhanu was a Chipluni Brahman, the Mahajan of the village of Velass.

The Maratha Bakhars (historical papers) throw clear light on the way in which the Bhanus came to be intimately connected with the family of the Peshwas. Balaji Vishwanáth, who afterwards became the first of the illustrious line of the Peshwas, lived at Shrivardhan with his brother Janoji. Shrivardhan was then under the tyrannical yoke of the

[1] The institutes of Shivaji form the basis of the whole Maratha system of government, either in the Deccan or in Gujarat. Shivaji had established the famous cabinet of Ashta Pradhan (eight ministers), but as the power of the Rájá was usurped by the Peshwas, so these Pradhans also were in their turn superseded more or less by the creatures of the rising Peshwa. Chief among these was the Phadnavis, who superseded his superiors the Muzimdars (financial ministers), and became under the Peshwa what the Pant Amat was under the old Rájá. The duty of the Phadnavis was to superintend the State records and public accounts.

Hubshis who ruled at Jinjira. Janoji was forcibly carried away to Jinjira, and was there shut up in a dark prison for a very long period, at the end of which he was ordered to be thrown into the sea by the ruthless Hubshi chief. Balaji, afraid of these unfriendly, ill-disposed, and mischief-meaning Hubshis, and apprehensive of a similar cruel fate, at once left Shrivardhan and repaired to Velass, another village in the Konkan. He was there the guest of Balaji Mahadev Bhanu, grandfather of the illustrious subject of this essay. The families of the Bhanus and the Bhatts were intimately connected with each other by strong ties of long-standing friendship. Bhanu, surprised at the unexpected arrival of Balaji Bhatt, inquired of him the cause of his so suddenly quitting his native place. Bhatt narrated the sad tale of the miserable end of his brother and the considerations which induced him to leave for good the place of his birth. Overcome with compassion Balaji Bhanu expressed his desire to participate with him in weal and woe and seek fortune abroad in his company. So Balaji Bhatt and the three Bhanu brothers—Balaji, Ramaji, and Hari Mahadev—repaired to Satara. In that city there lived Dhanaji Janardhan, chief military officer under Tarabai, who then managed the affairs of the kingdom, the civil administration being conducted by Shankaraji Narayen Sachiva. Through the instrumentality of one Mahadji Krishna Joshi, an old acquaintance of Ramaji Bhanu, the strangers had the good fortune of being introduced to the high officials. When Dhanaji went to pay his respects to Shahu Maharájá, then in Khandesh on his way to Satara from Delhi, he took with him his new friends—Balaji Vishvanáth, Balaji Bhanu, and Hari Bhanu. They were presented to Shahu Maharájá, who received them with great kindness. Afterwards when Shahu returned, Shankaraji, finding his fortunes on the decline, terminated his life with his own hands. The Peshwaship was then held by one Behero Pant Pingle, who was dismissed shortly after. The place thus vacated was conferred on Balaji Vishvanáth, who had by this time completely gained the confidence of the

Mahárájá. The disposal of the Phadnavisi was left to Balaji, who bestowed it on Hari Bhanu. With the assistance of the Bhanus, the Peshwa obtained possession of the two hill forts, Purandhar and Lohagadh, the latter of which was held by Kanoji Angre. The command of Lohagadh was given to Ramaji Bhanu. Hari Bhanu did not enjoy his new position very long, and when he died—only four or five months after his first appointment—Balaji Bhanu, the grandfather of Nana, was made Phadnavis. He accompanied the Peshwa to Delhi, in order to effect a reconciliation with the Saiyed brothers. In a conflict that took place between the armies of the Mogul Emperor and the Peshwa, Balaji Bhanu was slain. The post of Phadnavis was offered to Ramaji Bhanu, who declined it on the ground of his growing bodily debility. The Peshwa however insisted upon his accepting the place, and nominated Antaji Bhanu his assistant. Ramaji held the place for five years. When he died, his son Baburao and his nephew Janardhan, the father of Nana, were very young. Antaji continued to work as Phadnavis during their minority. The boys when they grew up were associated in the office of Phadnavis. Such were Nana's ancestors.[1]

The history of the childhood of this eminent statesman is shrouded in darkness. But for an autobiographical fragment we should have known absolutely nothing about the boyhood of Nana. When he was hardly ten years old, he was married to Yashodabai, a daughter of one Sadashiva Raghunath Gaudray. He was deprived of the fostering care of his father by the merciless hand of death. His father commanded great influence in the State, which secured for Nana without any great difficulty the honours of the Phadnavisi, the whole burden of the work falling upon the shoulders of his uncle Baburao (1756). Yashodabai bore him a son. The young Phadnavis was a great favourite with the Peshwa. With

[1] This account of Nana's ancestry is taken from "The History of th Peshwas" (Maráthi).

his brother Sadashivarao, known in history by the name of Bhau Saheb, Nana had contracted an intimate friendship. He proceeded to the banks of the Godavery with Bhau Saheb to perform the obsequies in honour of his departed father.

As the year 1761 was an ill-fated one in the Maratha annals, in which the Maratha power received a tremendous blow at the hands of the Moslem foreigners, a brief retrospective glance at the history of India will not be deemed out of place here. After the death of the great Mogul Emperor Aurangzeb, a succession of effete princes occupied the throne of the once glorious Indian Empire. In the struggle that ensued for the fragments of the Mogul dominions the Marathas had become conspicuous by their energy and cunning. With the Moguls of the North they had "a complicated, irreconcilable, and righteous quarrel." "The gods of the mountain," writes Mr. Sidney Owen, "were not the gods of the plain; the Maratha citizen whether Rajput, Brahman, Sudra, or of aboriginal lineage, justly apprehended himself to have been seriously and grievously threatened by the advance of the Moghul arms, and administrative system. And the pent-up mountaineer has constantly in similar circumstances made a sort of conscience of pressing upon the prosperous and luxurious denizens of the open country at his feet. On the whole, both Sewaji and his original followers might well hold, and did hold, that in waging war after their own fashion with the Mussalmans, they were doing both God and man good service, covering themselves with glory, and gaining not only welcome but creditably retributive spoils."[1]

With the death of Shiwaji, the founder and the upholder of Maratha greatness, the ties of unity which bound so long the Marathas together, were loosened. They could no longer work amicably together: usurpations and jealous dissensions followed. The heir of Shiwaji, a '*roi faineant*,' was a mere State prisoner at Satara: while the Peshwa, the mayor

[1] India on the Eve of British Conquest.

of the palace, had usurped regal authority. The Peshwa held his Court with regal pomp and splendour at Poona, and the various Maratha chiefs acknowledged the Brahman supremacy. Sindhia and Holkar were slowly consolidating their strength in Malwa, while the Gaikwad was gradually gathering strength sufficient to found that dynasty which still rules in Gujarat. When the Marathas were thus engaged in strengthening their position in the South, a series of ferocious invaders were making inroads upon the far-famed wealth of Hindusthan. The first that ransacked the imperial treasures at Delhi were the greedy Persians but they were followed in their train by the still more ferocious Afghans, who completed the work of devastation which the Persians under Nadir had only begun. Before 1761 the Marathas had extended their power to the North and had become the real masters of the imperial court at Delhi. They eventually met with a powerful opposition from Ahmed Shah Abdali, the great Afghan leader, who, from various motives, had adopted the cause of the Moslem rulers of the country against a strong confederacy of the Maratha chieftains. The Peshwa sent a large army under his brother Sadashivarao Bhau and his eldest son Wishwasrao. They were joined by Sindhia, Holkar, and the Bhonslay rulers of the vast region of the Berars.

The contending armies met at Paniput, a field immortalised in the ancient annals of India by the dreadful battle that took place in pre-historic days between the Pandavas and the Kauravas. The same field of battle had in later times more than once determined the fate of India; for it was on that field that Baber defeated the Lodi kings and established the great Mogul dynasty: and it was there that young Akbar crushed the daring Hemu and established his regal authority. Once more on that memorable field met the Afghans and the Hindoos to measure their strength. A pitched battle was unsuited to the tactics of the Marathas, who stood unrivalled in guerilla warfare. The Marathas were "accustomed to hard work and

hard fare. Their usual food was a cake of millet with perhaps an onion. Their arms were a sword and a matchlock, but oftener a bamboo spear thirteen or fourteen feet long, their national weapon, which they managed with extraordinary skill. Their horses were those of their own country—small, strong, and active, capable of enduring great fatigue, and taught to bound forward or stop, or to wheel round when at full speed on the slightest pressure from their rider's leg."[1] But at Paniput the Marathas had swerved from their traditional policy. Their camp was overcrowded by camp-followers, consisting of women of all ranks and positions of life, and men least capable of bearing arms. Their marches were attended with all the pomp of an imperial army—a feature altogether novel in Maratha warfare. Nana Phadnavis, the great friend of Bhau Saheb, had accompanied him with his wife and mother. We have from his pen a graphic account of the battle and the disaster that overtook the Maratha troops. He writes: "The Mahomedans from the North encamped on the other bank of the Jamna with about seventy-five thousand men. But the Jamna was not then fordable, and both the armies were as a matter of necessity forced to remain inactive on either side. The Peshwa captured Kunjarpura with great bravery. I was present in the battle. God saved me. The Mussulmans crossed the river just at this juncture. The Peshwa—Sadashivrao Bhau—faced them with his army. The armies met. I was at the time too young. The Peshwa was full of wisdom. But as fate would have it, his prudence failed him. My maternal uncle Balvantrao and Nana Purandhure and others who were his best friends were kept at a distance, while those who were not at all friendly, Shah Navasakhani, Bhavani Shankar, and others had won the confidence of Bhau Saheb, who was now guided by their counsels. The Peshwa trusting their word gave up the old national way of fighting and adopted the Mahomedan way. Skirmishes

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[1] Elphinstone's History of India.

took place almost every day. The enemy's cannons fired salvos every day in the direction of our tent. My mother and my wife were terror-struck. I often soothed my mother's fears by humbly suggesting to her to keep her faith in God. My maternal uncle who was in the fight fell. The whole army would have been routed that very day. But the approach of night saved it. In those two months the loss of life both human and animal was terrible. Grain became very dear. There was an awful stench. I never saw misery like this. The wife of my maternal uncle immolated herself on the funeral pile as " Sutee". My mother was excessively grieved. But it was destiny. Therefore there was no use harrowing our minds with anxiety. That was my philosophy. The grand battle was to be fought on the morrow. On the previous day I made up my mind in the event of defeat by no means to allow the family of the Peshwa and my own family to fall into the hands of the enemies. We should destroy them ourselves. The Peshwa made arrangements for this, feeling assured that he would not survive the day. The next day about an hour after sunrise everything was ready, and cannonading commenced on both sides. The Peshwa possessed great intelligence, noble courage, and bravery, though his past achievements had made him a little proud. But he made his arrangements with great skill. The strategic arrangements for the defence of the standard failed, and the enemy penetrated into the very heart of the army. I stood by the side of the Peshwa and offered short prayers to God. At this time Wishwasrao was struck by a bullet and fell down. The Peshwa placed him on an elephant and himself stood there. The Pathans leaving their horses rushed among us. The brave commanders who had the honour of being sent on the left of the Peshwa and the Sarnobat had already fled away. Sindhia and Holkar and other Sardars of the right wing had left the battle-field taking the standard with them. There were only about 200 or 300 soldiers. The Peshwa was lost to sight. God at the time inspired me with

an idea. I turned back. Some time before this while the battle was raging Bapuji Pant had advised me to leave the field. I replied that it would not be honourable for me to forsake the Peshwa at such a crisis. But in the end events turned out this way. Of the hundred thousand men, among whom there was many a nobleman, not one helped the Peshwa at such a critical time. All these men ate his food for so long a time and were loved by the Peshwa as if they were his children. All had sworn to kill themselves before they allowed a hair of his head to be injured. But they were all summer friends. In evil days brought by God who would befriend him? All were his companions of happy days. They would condescend to dine with him, would accept rich clothes, jewellery, and jaghirs. There were so many there at the last moment, yet none knew where his body lay. All were scattered to the winds."[1] Torrents of blood flowed on the field: and few survived to tell the tale of misery to their anxious friends and relations at home

> "Tradition, legend, tune and song
> Shall many an age that wail prolong:
> Still from the sire the son shall hear
> Of the stern strife and carnage drear
> Of Paniput's fatal field,
> Where shivered was Maharashtra's spear
> And broken was her shield."[2]

As to how he escaped from the battle-field and what various adventures he met with let Nana speak for himself. He continues:

"I entered Paniput on horseback at about an hour before sunset. I did not know the country and its roads. Ramaji Pant was standing there through God's favour to point the way out to me. He advised me to leave the horse and lay aside my clothes. I followed his advice and sat with only a 'langoti' on. I travelled at night. The topivalas (Afghans)

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[1] From an autobiographical fragment.

[2] Sidney Owen's India on the Eve of British Conquest.

examined me and felt all about me with their hands thrice on the road within a distance of one kos (about 2 miles). On every occasion some ten or twelve people of those who were with me were cut to pieces. I escaped through God's favour. Bapuji Pant, Ramaji Pant, and others were left on the way. In this way I had travelled some ten or twelve kos in the western direction when the same enemies came and wounded severely Ramaji Pant, Bapuji Pant, and others. They fell down. I was the only one left. I went and hid myself in the corn fields. God saved me through the instrumentality of the very grass. He blinded my enemies. They killed all and yet spared me, although I was so very near, and allowed me to reach the grass which was at some distance. When they had gone away I left my cover. I had barely gone some two kos when I again saw the enemy. I therefore again hid myself in the grass. They came there and wanted to drag me out. At such a juncture God inspired an old man of the party with pity, who said to his comrades, 'Why do you kill him?' They then went away. At this time I was considerably enfeebled by the physical suffering I had gone through in the camp at Paniput. I had suffered from various diseases such as dysentery and others. I could not eat my food. I never before this had to walk any great distance. Yet Sámba Sadashiva (the god Siva) taking pity upon me enabled me to walk some sixteen or seventeen kos without food and water. In the afternoon I felt the pangs of hunger. I tried to eat the leaves of the Bori tree. But I could not gulp them down, so I walked on and came to a village at eventide. A Bairagi gave me some flour. I made bread of it and ate it. It tasted as sweet as nectar. Then I slept. In the morning I again took the road repeating prayers to God and muttering the thousand names of the Ganges. I came upon a village. A sowkar who lived there took me to his house. I there met Yashvantrao, an attendant of the Peshwa's Horse-trainer, and with his help and that of a Brahman, food was cooked, and I dined. Just then I heard that the enemy's troops had entered the town.

The sowkar said that he would get us safe to Jayanagar in a carriage. We sat in the carriage and the journey began. I suspected some treachery and therefore left the carriage and continued the journey on foot. I had with me two or three Brahmans and two Marathas. In this way we journeyed some ten or twelve kos. We travelled on foot for some seven days. God every day somehow or other supplied us with provisions. We were thus able to satisfy our hunger, and in this manner we arrived at Rewadi. The fugitives from the camp had passed by that way and they had been questioned by four brothers called Balorao about my name and appearance. Having learnt these and hearing that I was following, they used to sit on the road awaiting my arrival. They recognized me as soon as I arrived at the outskirts of the village of Rewadi. They questioned me. I wanted to preserve my incognito. But they confidently called me by my name. I found that there was nothing objectionable in giving out my true name. They wanted to supply us with provisions and show kindness to us. I then told them my name. They took me to their house with my companions and provided a sumptuous feast. After dinner they presented clothes to us. Ramjidas Joshi, a rich man, hearing of our arrival took us to his house. He entertained us hospitably for seven days and made presents of clothes. We then expressed our desire to go to Deig Bharatpur. But he would find some companions for us and would see us safe there in a carriage. A marriage party happened to be going there. We were sent with them in a carriage, supplied with sweetmeats and other provisions. On the way we met Krishnabhata Vaidya. He informed me that Viroji Baroakar had brought my wife safely from the battle-field and that she was staying then at the house of Naropant Gokhle at Jingi. There that man (Naropant) supplied us with provisions and clothes and gave us a sumptuous feast consisting of 'kshir.' We were pleased. We then left the place after having provided a carriage for my wife. We arrived at Deig. Parshottam Mahadev had come

there from Paniput. He was staying at the house of Vanavle's agent. When he heard of our arrival he took us to his house. I stayed there with my wife for about a month. I used to feel the pangs of hunger very keenly at the time. He kept us well supplied with provisions. I made many inquiries about my mother. But my khidmatgar, who was with her, told me that she fell down from her horse, was wounded, and died. That was all the news I obtained of her. Afterwards having provided ourselves with a palanquin and horses we arrived at Gwalior by the road of Dhavalpur. Here Parvatibai, Nana Purandhare, Mulharji Holkar, and others of the army had already arrived. It was the wish of my heart that I should go to Kashi (Benares) and permanently reside there. Experience had taught me that everything in this world brought about misery. But my destiny proved stronger. When I arrived there all condemned my plan. They told me that I should once go to my native place and perform there the obsequies of my mother. How could I do all these things at Kashi? After the experience at Paniput I was rather anxious about the success of my plan of going to Kashi. Still I accompanied the force."[1]

Nana Saheb, the elder Peshwa, was at Burhanpoor. Flying rumours had already reached his ears regarding the disastrous result of the battle of Paniput. The intelligence of the defeat was received by the Peshwa from a communication addressed by a banker to his correspondent in the following significant words: "Two pearls have been dissolved, twenty-seven gold mohurs have been lost, and of the silver and copper the total cannot be cast up." This was sufficient to apprise the Peshwa of the fate of his beloved son Wishwasrao and his equally beloved cousin Sadashivrao, as well as of his esteemed officers and men. But still it was only a rumour, and his heart held out a little longer until that rumour was confirmed by the account of Nana Phadnavis. Balaji Bajirao never recovered

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[1] Autobiographical fragment.

from this fatal shock. He slowly retreated towards Poona—his faculties considerably impaired and his constitution totally undermined. He expired near the shrine of Devadeveshvara in June, 1761.

Wishwasrao, the eldest son of the late Peshwa, having slept an eternal sleep on the field of Paniput, the younger son Madhavrao was invested by the pageant king at Satara with the insignia of the office of the Peshwa. The young Peshwa was only seventeen years old. The administration of the kingdom, therefore, devolved upon his uncle Raghunathrao, destined to play a very prominent part in the near future. Raghunathrao, more generally known as Raghoba, was a great soldier who led the triumphant Maratha host from one end of India to the other—from Cape Komorin to the Punjab. He was a man of great ambition, greedy of power, and untractable in purpose. He was married to a Maratha lady—Anandibai—an evil genius who ruled over the weak-headed husband. Firm and ambitious, Anandibai was the very Avtar of Lady Macbeth. Controlled and guided by such a companion, Raghoba administered the office of Peshwa during his nephew's minority. Madhavrao, who was endowed with great intelligence and keen foresight, was not the youth to tolerate bondage for a long time. Raghoba never consulted him and administered the affairs in a high-handed and arbitrary manner. This overbearing conduct of his uncle gave deep offence to the young Peshwa. It was too much for his energetic soul to remain a puppet, and he demanded of his uncle some share in the administration. Such an insolent demand coming from so raw and inexperienced a youth was put down as highly presumptuous both by Raghoba and his colleague Sakharam Bapu. Convinced of his inability to do any thing without their help, and thinking that sooner or later they themselves were destined to wield the real power, they at once tendered their resignations. The Peshwa was too strongminded to be daunted by such a threat, and at once asked Trimbakrao Mama to take the place of his minister.

With rare sagacity he selected Nana Phadnavis and Hari Pant Phadke to be his personal advisers. The retirement of Raghoba and his colleague from the government served as a signal for the breaking out of open hostilities between the two parties formed at the capital—the party of the Peshwa headed by Gopikabai and that of Raghoba headed by the headstrong Anandi. Nizamali, the Mahomedan Viceroy of the Deccan, looked upon the freebooters, as they—the Marathas—were named by him, with feelings of contempt mingled with fear. He had inherited that contempt for the Peshwa and his followers from his father the far-famed Nizam-ul-Mulk,[1] the formidable competitor of the great Bajirao. Nizamali was a cautious and an avaricious chief, always on the watch to extend his territories at the cost of his neighbours'. The civil discord in the family of the Peshwa was an event long desired by the Mussalman. He at once made up his mind at such a juncture to take up the cause of one party against the other. Raghoba after his resignation went to Aurangabad and sought shelter with the Moguls quartered there.

Nizamali went forth with his army to support Raghoba's claim. Madhavrao had intelligence enough to forecast the evil consequences of such a dissension in his own family, and was desirous of an amicable settlement with his shortsighted uncle. Everything seemed to conspire against the young Peshwa, when he resolved upon throwing himself on the mercy of his enraged uncle, in order to put a stop to the much-feared dismemberment of his State. Raghoba, to his great satisfaction, saw that in the long run he had been triumphant, and that the Peshwa was now completely under his control. His vanity was gratified, and he once more reinstated his former colleague Sakharam Bapu as

1 An interesting anecdote is told in connection with an interview between this Nizam-ul-Mulk and his antagonist Bajirao. They met at Aurangabad. In the midst of their conversation they grew excited and hot words were exchanged between them. The Nizam said, "All Bajis are pajis" (cunning rogues), to which the Peshwa returned an appropriate repartee, "All Nizams are hazams" (barbers).

Prime Minister of all the Peshwa's dominions. In the disposal of other offices he disappointed the rightful claimants and thus raised a powerful clique against himself. The office of the Phadnavis, which had been held by Nana's uncle Baburao, and which after his death had descended to his son Moroba, was taken away from him and given away to an insignificant favourite. The clique thus raised against Raghoba spread much discontent throughout the kingdom. The Nizam once approached the very precincts of Poona, and Raghoba at last became conscious of the danger he was incurring. The disaffected Maratha officers were restored to their places. Though the office of the Phadnavis was not given to Moroba, it was conferred on the youthful Balaji Janardhan (Nana). Madhavrao was almost a prisoner in the hands of his veteran uncle, but Anandibai was not a woman to be satisfied with anything short of independent mastery over half the Peshwa's dominions. She constantly instigated her vain-glorious husband to take possession of half the Maratha dominions and leave the other half to their nephew.

While Raghoba was thus incessantly harassed by his ambitious wife, a new actor had come upon the stage of Indian history who disturbed the tranquillity that had been with extreme difficulty but recently established in the Deccan. This was no other than the formidable Hyder who had made his way to the throne of Mysore, dethroning the reigning Hindu chief. He was a mere Mussalman adventurer, who, though altogether illiterate, had by the sheer force of his bold and enterprising spirit risen to the highest power in a Hindu State. "Frequently overpowered by the force of external circumstances, we see him rise superior to each reverse, and more indomitable and threatening from each disaster. We see him secure internal tranquillity by a system of administration equally simple, effective, and awe-striking; extend the limits of his kingdom until it stretches nearly from sea to sea and includes a large part of Southern India; grapple with jealous and formidable hordes of Maharashtra in campaigns that wear

throughout an air of marvellous, and carry us back in association to Alfred's combats with the Danes. We see him meet at last on no unequal terms the armies of England and emerge victorious from the strife. Thus subtle, vigorous, terrible to his life's end, he leaves behind

'A name at which the world grew pale,'

and a reputation second to that of none of the military adventurers whom we have encountered in the East.[1]"

The Marathas could not safely remain silent spectators of the growing power of this Moslem usurper, and a large army was raised to march against him. Madhavrao was a great lover of war, and determined upon assuming the command of the troops, leaving his uncle to conduct the civil administration at Poona. The young Peshwa was successful, and forced Hyder to sign a treaty highly disadvantageous to the interests of Mysore. Madhavrao, desirous of appeasing his insatiable uncle, was quite willing to resign a considerable part of his power. In conceding even so much, he had to contend against the remonstrances of his mother Gopikabai, who was naturally jealous of Anandibai. She advised her son to assert his independence by throwing his uncle into confinement, but Madhavrao was not a man to adopt such an ill-advised measure. Raghoba openly assumed an attitude altogether hostile to the young Peshwa, and in a battle which ensued, he was defeated and captured. He was retained as a prisoner in Madhavrao's palace. The young Peshwa did not long survive this triumph. He had been of late suffering from consumption, which cut off the promising youth in the very flower of his age. A pathetic picture is given of the last hours of this amiable Peshwa by Maratha historians, which brings to light the feelings which characterised the dying youth, of whom such high expectations were formed. Madhavrao perceived that the affection from which he suffered was of such a malignant type that he would never recover from it. He called all

1 Owen's India on the Eve of the British Conquest.

his courtiers, including Sakharam, Nana, and Hari Pant, to his bedside, and thus spoke to them in an extremely touching tone: "I had formed many expectations and aspirations, the majority of which have, by the grace of God, been fulfilled: but alas! three purposes have yet been left unaccomplished." The courtiers were deeply touched at the dejected tone of their beloved chief, and Nana from among them all spoke: "May it please your Highness! your humble servant will deem it a great favour if you will kindly enumerate what those purposes are. If it lies within the capacity of your servant to perform them, nothing shall be so near to his heart as fulfilling the cherished wishes of his liege-lord." Madhavrao, with full confidence in Nana's ability, answered: "The Gilchis (Afghans) have slain Wishwasrao and Bhau Saheb in the battle of Paniput. I owe the deceased the heavy debt of retaliation, which I have not been able to liquidate. The first wish of my heart is, therefore, an adequate revenge upon the infidels. The next wish is that Tipu should be punished for his occasional insolence towards the mighty throne of the Peshwa . . . . . ." Of his third wish we shall have to speak later on. Young in years but in wisdom old, the departing Peshwa saw that after his death his brother, without the co-operation of Raghoba, would be unable to manage the affairs of the State so ably as to prevent disruption. Madhavrao thought it prudent to effect a reconciliation with his uncle, though the latter was then intriguing with the upstart Hyder and the wary Nizam. The Peshwa sent for him, and in the presence of all his courtiers, in a very affecting manner, handed over his young brother to the care of his uncle. "Gentlemen," he said, "I have to thank you much for the way in which you have served me, and for the attachment and fidelity you have always shown me. I request of you on my brother's behalf the same attention and fidelity that you have shown me. It is a child who will possibly have many crosses to bear. Follow the instructions my uncle gives you; he is about to govern the kingdom, and I hope that he will do it well. I hope also that you will all contribute to

preserve unity. I feel that I am becoming unmanned, and that I am unmanning you also. I ask your pardon. Farewell, gentlemen, I feel sure that you will think of me sometimes."

Thus perished Madhavrao at the youthful age of 28, in 1772. "The plains of Paniput," says the great historian of the Marathas, "were not more fatal to the Maratha Empire than the early end of this excellent Prince." The government under Madhavrao was the best that the Maratha country enjoyed under the "Hindu dynasty" in modern times. Of broad and liberal, statesmanlike views, Madhavrao had the well-being of his subjects uppermost in his heart. Grant Duff relates an interesting anecdote showing how the beneficent policy of the young Peshwa was hampered by the illiberal efforts of Sakharam Bapu, the sole minister of the kingdom. "The efficiency of Madhavrao's government in its commencement was rather clogged than assisted by the abilities of Sakharam Bapu. The influence of the old minister was too great for the talents of his young master. All actions deemed beneficial were ascribed to the former, whilst the unpopularity, which with some party is inseparable from executive authority, fell to the inexperienced Peshwa, and to Madhavrao in a peculiar degree, by reason of an irritable temper not always under command, which was his greatest defect. This influence on the part of his minister—a man open to bribery—prevented that respect for Madhavrao to which he was entitled, and without which the ends which he aimed at establishing were obstructed. Until after Raghoba's confinement Madhavrao was unknown to his subjects. Shortly after that event he privately sent for Sakharam Bapu, and told him 'that he found many of his orders disregarded, and that he was but a cipher in the government. Whether this proceeded from want of capacity or diligence on his own part, or any other cause, he was himself perhaps an incompetent judge; but he would put the question to his sincerity and begged of him to explain the reason and suggest the remedy.' Sakharam Bapu immediately replied: 'You can effect

nothing until you remove me from office, appoint Moroba Phadnavis your Dewan, when you can be your own minister.'"

Madhavrao died, and his brother Narayenrao was recognized by the puppet king at Satara and received the Peshwa's robe. Nana Phadnavis had up to this time occupied only a secondary place in the Peshwa's government. He was yet young and inexperienced, and his abilities were not as yet so fully developed as to enable him to take a leading part in the affairs of the State. The administration was therefore left wholly in the hands of the older and more experienced Sakharam Bapu. The Phadnavisi was branched off into two distinct departments, civil and military. Nana accepted the former, while the latter was conferred upon his cousin Moroba. The young Peshwa and his uncle, the Regent, lived on terms of intimacy, but for a short period only. Where the sovereign is a minor, and where intriguing women hold supremacy, there can never be permanent amity and tranquillity. Gopikabai once more began to encourage her son to assert his independence. Anandibai, on the other hand, instigated her husband to take advantage of the minority of the Peshwa and to set himself up as an independent Prince. In the contest that ensued the party of the Peshwa triumphed over the other. Raghoba was seized and kept in close confinement. The young Peshwa had a great predilection for Nana, though the wary Brahman thought it safe to work his way out by remaining for some time behind the curtain. Raghoba was ever exhorted by his wife to seek some means of escape and occupy the musnad. Raghunathrao wrote a letter to the commanders of the army, who were in his interest, imploring them to seize the person of the Peshwa; but the letter fell into the hands of his heartless wife, who by a slight change in a single word in that letter brought on a dreadful calamity resulting in the base murder of her nephew. The word धरावे (Dharave=seize) in the letter was changed to मारावे (Marave=kill). The officers of the army, under the pretext of demanding the arrears of their pay, obtained possession of the palace and rushed into

the room where the boy Peshwa was enjoying his midday siesta. The unfortunate youth, startled by the general roar and confusion, ran away to his uncle and clung steadfastly to his neck for protection. But a ruffian, who was once publicly flogged and disgraced and bore a private grudge against the Peshwa for it stabbed him. Thus though Raghoba was implicated in the plot, he could not be held responsible for the murder of his nephew, which must be attributed to the fatal change that his wicked wife had wrought in the letter. While the funeral obsequies of the unfortunate Narayenrao were being performed on the river-bank, Sakharam Bapu, Nana, Hari Pant, and Trimbakrao assembled together in a spot far from the public gaze, and there and then formed an idol of Shunkur out of the sand. They all placed their hands on the idol and solemnly pledged to remain faithful to the direct descendants of Nana Saheb (Balaji Bajirao) and not to bend their heads to Raghoba and his descendants.[1]

As there was no rival claimant to Raghoba, he was nominated Peshwa. He was never popular with the Marathas, and his own men now began to desert his cause, and turn against him. The man in whom he confided the most, who had been his colleague in the règime of Madhavrao—Sakharam Bapu—was a party to the conspiracy formed against him. Shortly after his accession to the musnad, Raghoba led a large army against their hereditary foe, Nizamali. Sakharam Bapu, Nana, and others were forced to accompany him in his march. The wary Raghoba had taken the precaution of keeping those who were discontented in his army under a strict surveillance. When the Maratha army lay encamped at Burhanpoor, Sakharam Bapu asked permission to return to Poona, which was soon granted by Raghoba. He repaired to his tent and sent for Nana and his other confederates, whom he asked to proceed with him to the capital. Nana answered that their movements were under restraint, and

[1] Maratha Bakhars.

that they would be but too happy to accompany him, if they could obtain Raghoba's permission. Sakharam promised them to do the needful, and sent for Raghoba's confidential Secretary. He explained to him the risk of keeping Nana and his friends in the very midst of the army even as captives. Such men, he said, would not fail to create disaffection among the soldiers some time or other. He advised him to go to the Shrimant (Peshwa) and request him to dismiss these suspicious characters from the camp. They could be kept confined in their houses and sentries placed at their doors to prevent them from stirring out without his Majesty's express permission. The folly of keeping them with the army, he said, even exceeded the folly of carrying burning coals in one's pockets. This trick of Sakharam Bapu proved more than successful, and Nana and others were sent back to Poona under the charge of the old trimmer. They remained at Poona for a short time without taking any steps to further their preconcerted plans. Sakharam, however, soon after reminded them of the purpose which had brought them thither. The officer in charge of the palace was easily gained over to their side. They took possession of the 'wada' (palace) and escorted its inmates—Gangabai, the widow of Narayenrao; Parvatibai, the widow of Bhau Saheb; and Durgabai, the daughter of Raghoba—to the hill-fort of Purandhar. Gangabai was declared to be enceinte, and therefore, pending the birth of a child, Raghoba's investiture was declared null and void. The partisans of Raghoba set rumours afloat all over the capital that they were to be imposed upon with an illegitimate sovereign by the intriguing ministers. These fears were strengthened by the fact that Gangabai was attended by several Brahman women, who were also pregnant. But so great was their confidence in the pious Parvatibai, and so great their hatred towards Raghoba, and his party, that the agitation soon subsided. Meanwhile the government was carried on by a Council of Regency consisting of Sakharam Bapu and Nana Phadnavis, with

Gangabai as their nominal head. This state of things lasted till 18th April 1774, when a son, Madhavrao Narayen, was born to Gangabai. This was a crushing blow to the tottering cause of Raghoba and his imperious wife Anandi.

Madhavrao Narayen, familiarly known as Savai Madharao, was invested with the Peshwa's robe when he was forty days old. Raghunathrao questioned the legitimacy of the child, though strong proofs were even then produced to show the contrary. The legitimacy of this posthumous Peshwa has been fully made out by the disinterested testimony of Durgabai, who was present on the spot at the time of Gangabai's confinement.

Savai Madhavrao was now acknowledged by his subjects as their legitimate Peshwa. Raghoba was very unwilling to resign the royal splendour which he had so long enjoyed. He appealed to the English at Bombay to support his cause. The English had by that time obtained a firm footing in many parts of India and had often held the balance between two contending Rájás. The Bombay Government had long perceived the importance of Salsette and other small islands surrounding Bombay; and it was now their primary object to obtain possession of these islands including Bassein. The appeal of Raghoba was readily taken up, but the surrender of Bassein and Salsette was made the preliminary condition of any support from the English contingent. Raghoba hesitated, and the negotiations collapsed.

Meanwhile the ministers at Poona became jealous of each other. Nana had by means of his activity, cleverness, and prepossessing manners succeeded in winning the heart of Gangabai, the young widow of Narayenrao. The Queen Regent was thence a ready tool in the hands of Nana. He could no longer brook the intervention of Sakharam Bapu in the management of the State. He was however too cautious to set aside the old man and openly take a leading part in the administration. He knew Sakharam to be a wary, time-serving old man, who carried considerable weight abroad. Nana,

"like the generality of men who have risen by revolution, and who seldom appear in the foreground in an infant government," continued to flatter Sakharam as before, and studiously abstained from giving the least cause to arouse his suspicions. Moroba Phadnavis had good reasons to be jealous of Nana's prosperity. For a short period under Madhavrao he was raised to the Prime Ministership. He was gradually sinking into a mere nonentity, while his cousin was growing into a central towering figure. Moroba, labouring under this chagrin, formed a separate faction with the intention of seizing the persons of Gangabai, her infant son, and Nana Phadnavis. Nana at once became aware of these plans, and he withdrew with Gangabai and the young Peshwa to the hill-fort of Purandhar.

These internal dissensions in the ministerial party afforded fresh hopes to Raghoba, who once more opened negotiations with the English Government at Bombay. They again offered the same terms as before, to which Raghoba, after considerable hesitation, yielded. The Bombay Government promised to support his cause with an English contingent, which was at once despatched under Colonel Keatinge. The ministerial party at Poona did not remain inactive in fancied security, but collected a large army to cope with the combined forces of Raghoba and the Bombay Government. A campaign in Gujarat was opened, which resulted in several engagements with varying success, and the party of Raghoba was left in the ascendant in the end. This circumstance created considerable alarm at Poona, where the people were greatly excited. In Asiatic warfares, a defeat is always followed by a general defection from the vanquished to the victors, and what Nana feared most was the breaking up of his party. It was the prime interest of Nana to keep Raghoba and his party out of power. He was ready to undergo any sacrifice to secure this object. He offered extensive territories to the greedy Nizamali and Raghoji Bhonslay, and entreated them to stand up for his cause. But events soon took a

favourable turn, and Raghoba was deprived of his most invaluable supporters, the English.

It was at this time that the famous Regulating Act came into force. It placed the Indian Administration under the supervision of a Supreme Government stationed at Calcutta. The Bombay and the Madras Governments were declared subordinate to the Supreme Government. "New authority," says Grant Duff, "is generally tenacious," and accordingly when the Supreme Government perceived that the Bombay Council had, by signing the treaty with Raghoba at Surat, acted independently, they peremptorily ordered the withdrawal of the troops sent to the assistance of Raghoba. The Bombay Government were asked to give up the cause of the base murderer. "You have imposed on yourselves," they were informed, "the charge of conquering the whole of the Maratha Empire for a man who appears incapable of affording any assistance in it." The Maratha war was declared "impolitic, dangerous, unauthorised, and unjust." The Bombay Government felt insulted at such impudent and unfounded accusations, and they sent one of their members, Mr. Taylor, to advocate their cause before the Supreme Council and justify the measures adopted by them. Notwithstanding Mr. Taylor's able advocacy the Supreme Government appointed Colonel Upton as their envoy, and instructed him to proceed forthwith to Poona in order to settle the affairs as amicably as possible between the ministerial party at Poona representing the Maratha nation and the Bombay Government.

This shortsighted policy of the Supreme Government proved prejudicial to the interests of the British power in India, for it exhibited a mutual want of confidence, while the prestige of the Bombay Government was considerably lowered. It, on the other hand, contributed to strengthen the Brahman party at Poona under Nana Phadnavis and the ministerial faction, which had been tottering of late, stood up once more erect. Colonel Upton arrived a

Poona and began to treat with Nana Phadnavis. The English envoy was a perfect gentleman, mild and moderate, but Nana misconstrued his mildness and assumed a menacing attitude, a peculiar characteristic in a Maratha Brahman. Nana insisted upon an immediate surrender of the person of Raghoba and the restoration of the conquered territory. Such an attitude on the part of the Poona Court was much resented by the Supreme Government, who now showed an inclination to espouse the cause of Raghoba. Nana had the sagacity to perceive the result, and when he found that his menaces had produced an effect contrary to what he had anticipated, he at once acceded to all the terms proposed by the British envoy. Thus on the first day of March a treaty was signed at Purandhar between the English represented by Colonel Upton, and the Marathas by the Peshwa delegating his power to his ministers Sakharam Bapu and Nana Phadnavis. The English bound themselves by this treaty to withdraw their army from the support of Raghoba, and to remain friendly with the Peshwa. Soon after Colonel Upton's mission was over, he was recalled by the Supreme Government. They, however, pointed out to the Bombay Government the advisability of appointing an English envoy at the Peshwa's court. Mr. Mostyn was chosen to fill that important place, and though the Ministers objected to his nomination, they were overruled, and he was at once sent to Poona, with instructions to remain on good terms with the Brahman Ministers.

Hornby, the then Governor of Bombay, in an elaborate and ably written Minute on Maratha affairs, remarks "that they were fast verging to a period which must compel the English nation either to take some active and decisive part in them, or relinquish for ever all hopes of bettering their own condition on the West of India." A serious incident had now occurred which called forth these remarks from that English statesman "The mere suspicion of a French intrigue," says Grant Duff, "always awakened the most active vigilance of the English Government in India." A vessel had arrived

from France, and among her passengers was an adventurer, who had imposed upon the Foreign Office in France, and obtained credentials to open negotiations with any Native power, and thus revive the French influence in India. St. Lubin, for that was the name of the adventurer, requested an audience with Nana, which was readily granted. On the 8th May 1777, the Chevalier St. Lubin had his audience with the Peshwa. The principal ministers were present when he presented his credentials with letters from the King and the French ministers, and made a suitable nuzar (present) to the Peshwa. "I cannot help here observing," wrote Mostyn, "the difference of his reception and mine on the occasion. Sakharam Bapu and Nana Phadnavis going without the tent-walls to receive him as he alighted from an elephant the Durbar had supplied him with, and introduced him into the Durbar; but they only sent Bhawani Pant to receive and introduce me. Indeed, in every respect they pay the greatest attention to the French." Such a distinction paid to a French impostor, the effect of which was enhanced by the utter indifference displayed towards Mostyn, created great alarm and anxiety at the head-quarters. The following letters written by Madjet and Farmer give a clear idea of the secret negotiations between the French impostor and the Brahman ministers: "Chevalier St. Lubin delivered two letters, one from the King in a gold bag for the Peshwa, and one in a silver bag said to be from the Vazir of France, which was delivered to Nana Phadnavis..... About the latter end of June St. Lubin sent a circular order directed to every subject of the King of France, then residing in Poona, and requiring them to meet at the house of Nana Phadnavis at 3 o'clock in the afternoon to be witness to the oaths taken by the Ministers of the respective nations relating to a perpetual alliance to be formed between the King of France and the Maratha State. I have heard it repeatedly mentioned by the different gentlemen who were there, that there was some written instrument, on one side of which Nana swore by the law and to the other

side Mons. de St. Lubin swore by the Holy Evangelists." [1] (Madjet to W. Lewis). St. Lubin by that instrument promised to supply a large French army to support the ministerial cause, if Nana entered into an offensive and defensive alliance with the Government of France. "There is every just reason to suspect that Nana seeks to fortify himself in this government against his competitors, and against us by means of his connections with the French; and his hopes of what St. Lubin may effect are strongly marked in the great protection he affords him. He must feel that if we were once but convinced of this, that our interests would lead us into the necessary measures to prevent this connection; and the only effectual one is a total change of the government here which, he must be sensible, we could effect long before the time that he can expect the French here. His policy, therefore, must be to keep us quiet and the Bengal Government amused and unsuspicious, till he sees the event of his negotiation with St. Lubin." [2] (Farmer.) Consummate rogue as St. Lubin was, the quick discernment of Nana proved too strong for him. He excited the sympathy of other Marathas by exhibiting at the court a vivid picture, drawn in exquisite colours at Paris, in which was delineated the touching scene of the murder of Narayenrao clinging to the neck of his uncle Raghoba, a device known to the Europeans alone. With all that, Nana only cajoled him with feigned attentions and vain hopes. A cheat in European garments was a figure altogether novel to Nana. He had always entertained a deep-rooted hatred towards all foreigners in general, and the mean conduct of St. Lubin only contributed to lower the French still more in his estimation.

When Nana Phadnavis was thus cajoling this self-created envoy with false promises, events occurred at Poona which required his prompt attention. Internal dissensions among

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1 Prof. Forrest's "Selections from Maratha State Papers."

2 W. G. Farmer's letter; from Prof. Forrest's Selections.

the Brahman ministers began to assume a threatening aspect. Moroba openly raised the standard of hostility against Nana. He was supported by all the partisans of Raghoba; and Tukaji Holkar, who up to that time had been a firm ally of Nana, was also gained over to the side of the malcontents. Gangabai had committed suicide. The eyes of the old Sakharam were also now opened to the secret working of his seemingly humble colleague. This induced him to join the clique formed to reinstate his old master on the musnad. But Sakharam had not the decision of character to throw his heart and soul into the plot. He was wont to adopt half measures only. Nana's cousin resorted to the Bombay Government, which he knew to be secretly inclined to the cause of Raghoba. The Bombay Council had already suffered the humiliation of witnessing their measures thwarted by the Supreme Government. As a precautionary measure they demanded a written statement from Sakharam Bapu, who formed a party to the treaty of Purandhar, to the effect that the intervention of the Bombay Government in the internal affairs of Poona was invited at his own special desire. Sakharam had not the courage to make any such avowal, and the whole plot fell through. The Bombay Government still held firmly to their declared opinion that they were not secure as long as the Brahman ministers under the astute Nana reigned supreme in the councils at Poona. Nana had to bring into play all his tact and artifice in order to govern that complex machine at Poona; but with all his caution he suffered one strong rebuff in his rather premature attempt to seize Moroba, who at once fled from Poona. Such a discomfiture would have appalled the stoutest heart, but Nana with consummate skill used Sakharam as his own tool, and through him persuaded Moroba to return, on condition that suitable places in the government would be provided both for him and his adherents. Moroba still continued to support, in Nana's presence, the cause of Raghoba, but Nana reminded him of their palmy days under Madhavrao I., and dwelt with

great force upon the dishonour and disgrace which Raghoba had brought upon the whole Maratha nation. Moroba had not the courage to contradict Nana, and he was soon gained over. Though thus bribed, Moroba was not a mere silent spectator of all the machinations of his shrewd cousin. He objected to recognize the agency of St. Lubin, but that French cheat was urged by Nana to be always attentive to his cousin, and to seek every occasion to ingratiate himself with him. Nana's object in keeping St. Lubin at the Court of Poona was simply to intimidate the English and not to flatter the French. "His jealousy of Europeans would never have admitted a French force sufficiently strong even for the expulsion of the English, unless he could have been certain of crushing them afterwards." Nana went on smoothly with his cousin for a short time; but just as a lion crouches before he leaps forward upon his prey, so did the wily Brahman wait patiently for a favourable opportunity. The opportunity came with the succours from Mahadji Sindhia, and he bounded upon his prey—Moroba—seized him and his adherents. He was perfectly aware that Sakharam Bapu was also privy to Moroba's schemes, but for the present he did not disturb that old man's equanimity. He put off his overthrow to a later and still more favourable opportunity. It may be mentioned here that Mahadji Sindhia was then in the interest of Nana; for, at the time of his accession, Nana had advocated his cause against the rival claims of other competitors.

Nana Phadnavis thus succeeded in at last crushing the opposition which had assumed an alarming aspect among his own people. Now he had to cope with a foreign nation inferior to none in diplomacy. The English had long resented the retention of St. Lubin at the court of Poona, and the Bombay Government issued orders to Mostyn to ask for an explanation. Hardly was the ink, with which the treaty of Purandhar was signed, dry, when Nana treated it as a mere dead letter and evaded the fulfilment of its stipulations. Mostyn in a letter to Nana asked whether he considered himself bound or not

and if he did consider himself bound by that treaty, whether he was prepared to dismiss at once St. Lubin from his court, and stop all intrigues with the French. Nana for a long time evaded all those repeated demands, but at last when an ultimatum was sent to him, he returned impudent and evasive answers. But with all these petty annoyances, he perceived that the time had not yet come when he could rouse the British lion with impunity. In order to appease the wrath of the Bombay Government, he dismissed St. Lubin from Poona, though at the time of his departure he assured the French agent that he would be very willing to give the French a respectable establishment in the Maratha territory, if he returned with a large French contingent. The Bombay Government dived deep into Nana's plans, and resolved upon adopting prompt measures for the removal of the Brahman, who had been so long scheming for the extirpation of this handful of distant islanders. They opened negotiations with Raghoba, but now upon a slightly altered basis. They did not now propose to support Raghoba in his claims to the musnad, but admitting the legitimacy of the young Peshwa, they nominated Raghoba his Regent during his minority.

The preparations of the Bombay Government to carry out their object were quite inadequate and unstatesmanlike. Though they raised a strong army, yet the command of it was entrusted to an officer who had seen but little of Maratha warfare. Nana perceived the clouds gathering on the horizon, and his preparations to face the approaching storm were made on a sufficiently elaborate scale. He doubted the sincerity of Sakharam Bapu. He feared that the old man would desert him at the most critical moment, and therefore, under the pretext of his infirm age, Nana removed him from his place, though, to flatter the old man, he continued seemingly to be guided by his counsels. The march of the English army was unusually dilatory, which afforded ample time to Nana to complete his preparations. All the feudatory princes assembled together, and a vast army under Mahadji

Sindhia, Tukaji Holkar, and Hari Pant Phadke, advanced to meet the army of the English approaching the capital. Nana Phadnavis upon maturer consideration perceived that it would be impolitic to remove so influential a man as Sakharam from the administration at such a critical moment, and a reconciliation was therefore soon brought about between the rival statesmen. Sakharam Bapu was once more reinstated in his former place. The Maratha troops avoided an engagement with the English army until a more favourable opportunity—which was not far distant—offered itself. History has often proved how futile and disastrous are the actions of an army the command of which is entrusted not to one competent officer, but to a committee composed of various men of various views. In such an arrangement the responsibility is divided among the several members of the committee; and at the time of disaster, every one tries to shirk the responsibility off his head. In the Napoleonic wars, the movements of the Austrian army were always hampered by the deliberations of the Aulic Council, and the result of such a lax system was the complete overthrow of the troops sent to fight against the Marshals of France. A similar shortsighted policy was adopted this time by the Bombay Government. A council consisting of Colonel Egerton, Mr. Carnac, and other members, regulated the movements of the army, which soon found itself entangled in an inextricable snare. Difference of opinion, as was natural, arose among the members of the committee as to the means of getting out of the difficulty unscathed. After a long discussion, a safe retreat was the course adopted in the council. With unwilling hearts the brave soldiers retraced their steps, condemning the cowardly measure resorted to by their officers. The Marathas, seeing the enemy beating a retreat, pursued them, and soon overtook their rear. The disasters of a retreat roused all the nobler feelings of the soldiers, who presented to the pursuers an unassailable front. But the soldiers were after all to obey and not command. They could do nothing beyond offering a strong resistance. At Wadgaon,

a convention was at length agreed upon between the contending armies. Nana was highly elated at this success which the Marathas obtained over the English. He at once resolved upon treating with the English on terms most humiliating to them. He peremptorily asked for the immediate surrender of the person of Raghoba—"an ill-omened master whose presence seemed to blight the fairest prospect of every affair in which he was engaged." He also insisted upon an immediate restoration of all the Maratha possessions which the English had acquired since the death of Madhavrao I. The English, who had no other course left open to them, yielded to all the humiliating terms dictated by the Brahman minister. To add insult to injury they were forced to send two hostages—the first of the kind after the establishment of the English in India—to the enemy's camp as a guarantee that they would not break those stipulations in their future dealings with the Maratha government. This disgraceful convention of Wadgaon was condemned by the Supreme as well as by the local Governments as calculated to lower the British prestige in the eyes of other nations; and the Bengal Government pronounced it null and void. The various actors in the convention were dismissed from the service, and the enmity towards Nana Phadnavis became thenceforth more pronounced than ever. The measures of the Bombay Government were again declared to be "imprudent and impolitic, ill-concerted and badly executed." The Bombay Government, urged by the childish desire of exhibiting to the world at large their strength and resources, independent of all aid from the sister Presidencies, had eventually failed most miserably in their ill-advised attempt. "Their army had returned defeated, their treasury was exhausted, their credit insignificant, and their reputation sullied." Raghoba feared that he would readily be made a scapegoat by his allies. In order to escape such a calamity, he surrendered himself to Mahadji Sindhia, and opened a separate negotiation with him.

Hornby, who was at the head of the Bombay Government, was not at all daunted by the calamity that brought such a

lasting disgrace upon his administration. He began once more to carry on vast preparations for the approaching campaign against the Marathas. The Supreme Government also saw their short-sightedness in deprecating every now and then the measures of the sister Council at Bombay. Warren Hastings now ordered a large army under Colonel Leslie to march to the South to serve as a reinforcement to the Bombay contingent. The Bombay Council emphatically declared that their final aim must be the complete exclusion of the French interest from the Maratha Court. They also convinced the Indian Government that Sindhia had, in his recent intercourse with them, exhibited a complete aversion towards the French, and had expressed his sincere desire to enter into an alliance with the English against the French and Nana Phadnavis—against Nana, because of his reception of St. Lubin. A contest for supremacy had of late estranged Mahadji Sindhia from the ministerial party headed by Nana. Sindhia, after the prominent part he had played in the operations ending in the convention of Wadgaon, had always been striving for an ascendancy which it was Nana's prime interest to monopolize solely to himself. Mahadji, to secure his object, sought the assistance of the English. By their instrumentality he wanted to give a death-blow to Nana's increasing power. But his personal interests demanded that Nana should not altogether be set aside. The Bengal contingent under Colonel Leslie, which was sent to co-operate with the Bombay army, was so very dilatory in its movements that the Governor General was enraged at the inertness of the English officer. He thereupon despatched a dashing officer, Colonel Goddard, to replace Leslie; but Leslie died before the new officer could come up to relieve him. Goddard had received instructions to open negotiations with Mudaji Bhonslay of the Berars, whilst the British troops passed through his territories, and try to secure his influence against the Maratha Brahmans at Poona, by promising Mudaji that he would be created the chief of the whole Maratha nation. But Mudaji was not prepared for such an offer: and his mind misgave him.

While Goddard was marching with his troops, intelligence arrived in India of a war being declared in Europe between England and France. The Governor-General feared a coalition between the Marathas and the French in India, mainly through the exertions of St. Lubin. Warren Hastings at once sent orders to General Goddard to use all his discretion to bring about peace with the Ministerial party at Poona, on the basis of the treaty of Purandhar; but with an additional proviso relating to the utter exclusion of the French from the Maratha dominions. Goddard was also instructed to gain over Mahadji Sindhia (in order to intimidate Nana Phadnavis) and to negotiate with him separately, if he volunteered to promote the cause of the East India Company. Sindhia had espoused the cause of Raghoba on whom he settled a jaghir for his maintenance. Nana was not intimidated by this move on the part of Sindhia. He was secretly pleased at Mahadji's connection with one who was an object of hatred to the Marathas; he was therefore less likely to be followed than shunned by them. In accordance with the instructions received from the Supreme Government Goddard opened negotiations with Nana Phadnavis, but month after month passed away without their arriving at any definite result. Meanwhile Nana was not sitting with his hands folded, idling away his time, but was occupied in rousing the whole Maratha nation to join him against the foreigners. Goddard, when he came to know of such a general confederacy forming against him, pressed Nana to give a final reply to his proposals, but Nana asserted that the surrender of the person of Raghoba and the island of Salsette should be made the preliminaries to any peace that might eventually be concluded between them. Goddard highly resented such a reply, and broke off the negotiations with Nana, insolently dismissing his Vakeels from his camp. General Goddard was welcomed by the Bombay Government, who advised him to support the cause of Fatehsing Gaekwad, who was then fighting against his brother Govindrao for the possession of the territory of Baroda. A treaty offensive

and defensive was at once signed by Goddard on one side and Fatehsing Gaekwad on the other.

The 'kaleidoscopic' politics at Poona underwent changes with amazing rapidity. Old Sakharam Bapu had fallen a victim to the insatiable ambition of Nana. He had employed Sindhia as his instrument to gain his end. Sakharam Bapu's person was seized by Sindhia and handed over to Nana Phadnavis. Several papers in connection with a plot in which the old man was implicated were exhibited to him. He was imprisoned in the hill-fort of Sinhgadh. The poor old man, who had once swayed the destinies of a mighty nation, was thence removed to Pratapgadh, and kept there all alone and unfriended. "Thus," says Grant Duff, "this venerable old man after sharing every vicissitude of privation and of grandeur, of toil and of triumph, which a leader in the camps and courts of a great Empire must experience, now looked down on a scene more awful to a mind in his situation, than the tremendous abyss of four thousand feet of black rugged rock which formed the western wall of his prison: for from Pratapgadh on the eastern side he saw a spot where 120 years ago his ancestor Pantoji Gopinath pledged to Shewaji the treacherous oath which betrayed his master Afzulkhan to the stab of the murderer." But that spot was not to see the dust of the veteran politician "returning to dust." Sakharam was removed from one place to another, until he was at last confined at Raegadh. The ever-memorable words put by the immortal English dramatist in the mouth of the once great Cardinal Wolsey, when he was also reduced to a similar condition, apply exactly to the case of Sakharam Bapu:

> "Farewell, a long farewell to all my greatness.
> This is the state of man."

Thus fell Sakharam Bapu from the highest pinnacle of ambition that he had ever reached. He expired at Raegadh—a prisoner of his former colleague, far away from his unfortunate wife and children, with none "near to keep one vigil over his bed," and none to shed an affectionate tear over the dead body

of him who has been admitted to be one of the wisest men of his age.[1]

While Nana was thus engaged in getting rid of Sakharam, a campaign was opened in Gujarat, the principal actors in which were General Goddard supported by Fatehsing Gaekwad on one side and Sindhia, Holkar, and the Ministerial supporters on the other. Nana Phadnavis was much agitated, and he forthwith made preparations against the coming danger. Mahadji Sindhia was not on good terms with Nana at this critical time, which was a source of great anxiety to the Brahman minister. But fortunately the claims of common danger asserted themselves, their petty differences were made up, and Sindhia agreed to take the field against Goddard in Gujarat. The founder of the Maratha supremacy was the model after which the character of Mahadji was formed. None excelled him in the art of double-dealing. He despatched an envoy to the English camp, with the ostensible purpose of negotiating with the English, but in reality to gain time and to prolong the campaign. The Maratha envoy complained of the treachery of Nana, dwelt at some length upon the recent estrangement of feeling between his master and that wily Brahman, and assured the English General that his master would be but too willing to join the English in their attempts to remove Nana from the head of the administration. Goddard was not a man to be deceived by such protestations, and he asked the envoy to submit in writing all the terms which his master was willing to offer. Sindhia expressed his approval of Nana's dismissal, and in that case he volunteered to be the Regent of the young Peshwa. Every stipulation that was in any way calculated to be beneficial to the English interest was studiously kept out of that written document. Goddard comprehended the motives which had actuated Sindhia in

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[1] Sakharam Bapu, or as he was otherwise called Sakharam Bhagvant Vakeel, was considered one of the "three wise men and a half" in Maharashtra.

adopting such an attitude, and he at once led his troops against those of Sindhia and Holkar, who fled before him, and deliberately avoided an action with the English. Mahadji now opened negotiations with Govindrao, the great rival of Fatehsing; and when this new ally was gained over to his side, he made up his mind to oppose the English in an open field. Nothing was more welcome to Goddard. An engagement took place, and the English arms were successful. The troops of Goddard were frequently hampered in their marches by detached battalions of Sindhia and Holkar. The English General promptly took steps to get rid of these guerilla bands. He wrote to Warren Hastings to send a detachment against the territories of Sindhia and Holkar, which would create the desired diversion in the enemy's troops. Captain Popham was accordingly sent to Malwa. He besieged Gwalior, hitherto deemed impregnable, but it yielded to the strong battering trains of the English force. Nana Phadnavis was meanwhile making considerable ravages in the Concan, when the valiant Colonel Hartley of the Bombay Army was gallantly withstanding the vast Maratha host. The important hill-fort of Bassein now became the principal scene of action. The English detachment laid siege to that fortress, and Nana despatched a vast army of the Marathas to the succour of the besieged. The English were very few in number and the odds seemed fearfully against them. The Bombay Government requested General Goddard to abandon his operations in Gujarat and at once fly to the succour of the English at Bassein. But before Goddard could come up to the rescue, the Marathas had given up; and Bassein was once more occupied by the English. This and other similar reverses in the Concan dismayed Nana, who was by this time convinced of the superiority of the English.

When the whole army was united under General Goddard in the vicinity of Bassein, letters were received from the Supreme Government to open negotiations with the Peshwa. "It was not peace," wrote Hastings, "with conditions of advantage

he wanted, but speedy peace for which he would sacrifice every foot of ground he had acquired from the Marathas." The reason which prompted the Governor General to change so suddenly the hitherto adopted policy is yet unknown. As was then surmised, it had come to the knowledge of the Supreme Government that a strong confederacy was then being formed between the Marathas, Nizamali, and Hyder to hunt out every Englishman from India. Goddard was, however, ordered to continue his operations as long as the Peshwa did not cease hostilities on his side. The Bombay Government were exhausted of both men and money. They therefore hailed with joy the approaching prospects of a long desired peace. But the Peshwa did not cease hostilities on his part, and the English had to carry on their operations even with exhausted means. Goddard now made up his mind to intimidate the Ministers in the very heart of Poona. He ordered his army to cross the Bore Ghaut. This was not a wise step as events subsequently showed. Goddard committed the same error as the Bombay Government had fallen into, when they ordered that disastrous march through the ghauts, which ended in the disgraceful convention of Wadgaon. Nana Phadnavis, whose political boldness stood in strong contrast to his personal timidity, was not at all daunted by this sudden appearance of the English in the very neighbourhood of Poona. On the contrary, it roused him to bolder and more desperate actions. He ordered to lay waste the surrounding country,—a step which was subsequently taken on a similar occasion by the patriotic Russians when the gigantic hosts of Revolutionary France under the leadership of the great Napoleon were marching through the snows of Russia. Nor was the patriotism of Nana inferior to that of Count Rostopschin, who ordered Moscow—the city of palaces,—to be burnt down to the ground before the French enemies could lay their blood-stained hands on their far-famed Kremlin; for, as is alleged, Nana had also issued orders to burn the ancient city of Poona and turn it into a heap of ruins before the English

could approach the Maratha capital. Nana, to gain time for completing his preparations, sent an envoy to Goddard's camp, with instructions to feign to treat with the English, and thus delay their operations as long as possible. Goddard opened negotiations with him on the terms arranged a short time before by the Governor General with Mudaji Bhonslay of the Berars. These terms were summarily rejected by Nana, who addressed the following letter to Goddard :—"The copy of the proposals which you have sent has been read from beginning to end by your friend, and it is certain that the contents therein written are not proper or fit for the approbation of this government. If you be sincere in your desire of friendship, it is incumbent on you to make proposals which shall include those persons[1] who at this time are allied to and connected with the councils of this State." [2]

The young Peshwa was now in his seventh year. Nana, to secure his safety, sent him over to the hill-fort of Purandhar. He himself at the head of a large army marched towards the Ghauts. General Goddard had anticipated nothing but brilliant results from his bold manœuvre ; but when he found that his handful of brave men were hard pressed by a host of sturdy free-booters, he lost heart and began to realize that discretion was the better part of valour. He thought it safe to withdraw without hazarding any action and adopt only a defensive attitude. The retreat was the most orderly of its kind ; but orderly as it was, it was necessarily attended with many evils. Goddard had erred, and erred most seriously. Nana elated with pride and glory determined to preserve a menacing attitude towards the enemy and to adopt a high-handed policy.

Captain Popham's detachment was reinforced by a division under Colonel Carnac. Sindhia met these forces in person, but after several passages at arms, he suffered a total defeat.

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[1] Refers to Hyderali of Mysore.

[2] Extract from a letter of Nana to Goddard, 5th March 1781.

Mudaji Bhonslay was chosen by Hastings as his instrument. Though he was a member of the general Maratha confederacy, he was detached from it by the promise of a large sum from the English Government. Mahadji Sindhia was the first to make advances to the English for peace. David Anderson was nominated as an agent on behalf of the Governor General, to proceed to the camp of Mahadji and to treat with that potentate. A treaty with the English was eventually concluded at Salbai, Mahadji acting as the plenipotentiary of the Peshwa, Nana Phadnavis, and the whole Maratha nation (17th May 1782). The general tenor of the treaty was the preservation of amity between the English and the Marathas, security to the person of Raghoba, and the restoration of mutual possessions occupied since 1776, the date of the treaty of Purandhar. Though the treaty was definitely settled between the English and Sindhia in the month of May, the seal of the Peshwa was not affixed to it till December of the same year, nor was it ratified by Nana till February of the following year.

During the last war fortune had smiled on Nana, whose influence with the Peshwa and the people was uniformly increasing. With his rival Mahadji Sindhia, the case was quite the reverse. He had suffered complete reverses both in Gujarat and Malwa, and it was the immediate ratification of the treaty of Salbai that saved him from utter destruction. Although the interests of Nana and Mahadji seemed to be at variance for the time, yet their ultimate object was the same, viz., the preservation of the Maratha Empire in its entirety to serve as a strong bulwark against all foreign aggressions. Both the diplomatist and the soldier saw the advisability and admitted the wisdom of procuring a general peace; but at the same time both were equally willing to set aside the treaty in such of its parts as were calculated to be prejudicial to their individual interests. Hyderali was the central figure on whom now rested all the hopes of the Brahman minister. He was, however, loth to show his total dependence on Hyder

to the envoys sent to him by the Mysore usurper. In all his subsequent communications with the English he tried to intimidate them on the strength of his intimate friendship with the Mussalman who had risen on the ruins of the Hindu sovereignty at Mysore. In his dealings with the envoys of Hyder, however, Nana pretended to be fully satisfied with the terms agreed upon at Salbai; and threatened them with a coalition between the Marathas and the English against Hyder, if the latter failed to restore to the Peshwa his southern possessions. "Habits of dissimulation and falsehood, no doubt, mark a man of our age as utterly worthless and abandoned; but it by no means follows that a similar judgment would be just in the case of a Daccani Brahman of the 18th century." The aim of Mahadji Sindhia was the establishment of a virtually independent kingdom in the North, to which his attention was now solely directed. While all the principal actors were thus deeply engaged in intrigues and counter-intrigues, an event occurred which smashed all their machinations. Hyderali, while marching with his army, died suddenly in December 1782. This event settled for a time the measures of Nana Phadnavis, who soon after consented to ratify the treaty of Salbai, by affixing to it the seal of the Brahman sovereign. Immediately after the occurrence of this event, an accident took place which might have seriously disturbed the existing relations between the Marathas and the English. The Maratha Admiral attacked an English ship when peace was subsisting between them. Though the recognized masters of the sea exhibited their usual valour on their own element, odds went against them and they had to give in. The plundered ship was returned to the English with ample apologies. These excuses were readily accepted, and nothing of any importance came out of that dreadful oversight.

Hyderali was succeeded by his son Tipu, who, though not possessing his father's intellect, was a man of strong likes and dislikes. He bore an implacable hatred against the English, and it was the cherished desire of his heart

to exterminate the foreignors and bring the whole of Hindusthan beneath his sway. The affairs of the Madras Presidency were feebly managed. This circumstance went a great way in smoothing the course of Tipu. The terms of the treaty of Salbai, though ratified by the Marathas, were not yet accepted by Tipu Sultan. He made several inroads upon the British possessions situated in the Madras Presidency. It was the interest both of Mahadji Sindhia and Nana Phadnavis to prevent Tipu from breaking any of the settled terms. Mahadji anticipated Nana, and offered to intercede proposing an alliance between the English and the Marathas against Tipu. But Nana was jealous of Mahadji; he therefore opposed every measure in which his rival took a prominent part. Thus the whole scheme fell through. Meanwhile the Madras Government, intimidated by the successes of Tipu, were very anxious to form an alliance with that bold adventurer. The Governor-General sent orders to the Madras Government to treat with Tipu only on the basis of the treaty of Salbai. Tipu was too arrogant to accept any terms which were not totally derogatory to the English and their allies. The English envoys were grossly insulted, and were made to stoop down before the tyrant as humble supplicants for the peace. Under such humiliating circumstances was the treaty of Mangalore signed, from which all mention of Salbai was studiously kept out. This was in diametrical opposition to the distinct orders of the Governor-General, who was much displeased with the gross misbehaviour of the Madras Government. The Maratha powers were also much dissatisfied at the omission of the name of Salbai, which implied the total independence of Tipu. Nana Phadnavis, enraged at the imperious conduct of Tipu, demanded from him the payment of the arrears of tribute promised by his late father Hyder. He knew that Tipu was too brave a soldier to yield easily and pay the tribute, which was a sure sign of subordination, and therefore, from the moment that he sent his agent to the Mysore Court,

he began to make preparations for the war which would inevitably be declared against Tipu. Conscious of his inability to cope with the formidable Mussalman chief unaided, he began to open negotiations with his veteran neighbour Nizamali. For the first time were the Courts of Poona and Hyderabad on terms of intimacy. Nana proceeded in person to meet his new ally, and a conference between them was held at Udgar. A settlement of the outstanding balances as regards the Maratha claims to the Chouth ($\frac{1}{4}$th of the revenues) and Sardeshmookha ($\frac{1}{10}$th part) served to veil the real motive of Nana to enter into an alliance offensive and defensive with the Nizam against the Sultan. Nizamali perceiving the importance which Nana attached to his alliance, set a high price upon it and demanded the cession of the important forts of Bijapoor and Ahmudnagar. Nana saw that Nizamali put too exorbitant a price on his frendship; but as his own interests were atstake, nothing was deemed too much to secure his end. He agreed to the terms with some slight modifications, and the conference broke up after attestations of general amity between the two powers. The intelligence of that conference and the general tenor of the alliance soon reached Tipu's ears. He was much incensed at the hostile attitude thus assumed by Nizamali and Nana against him. Upon a trivial pretext of enforcing equal weights and measures throughout the Deccan, Tipu invaded the territories of the Nizam. So rapid and sudden was the invasion that he was hardly prepared to meet it. Nizamali sent an envoy to Nana Phadnavis imploring him to put the arrangements agreed to at Udgar into force and send succours to his troops. Nana had no troops at hand which he could spare. Again, he was engaged in affairs involving his own personal safety. He therefore was unable to carry out the terms of the conference. Nizamali had no other alternative but to send an envoy to Tipu's camp soliciting a speedy cessation of hostilities. This request, to the great surprise of the Nizam, was readily granted

by Tipu, who was also equally unprepared for a protracted war.

The overpowering argument which prevailed on Nana to break the terms of the Udgar conference was a conspiracy against him of his political opponents. Raghoba, after the treaty of Salbai, was living with his wife Anandi and his children at Kopargaon. Anandibai, in her despair of getting any issue, had adopted one Amritrao as her son. But while Raghoba was flying before the ministerial army in 1774, she was delivered of a son at the hill-fort of Dhar. He was named Bajirao, destined to be the last of the Peshwas. Raghoba died at Kopargaon in 1784, leaving behind a son and a step-son. Soon after his death a posthumous son named Chimnaji Appa was born. His old partisans now conspired to depose Madhavrao Narayan, whom they still held to be an illegitimate child and place Bajirao, a direct descendant of Balaji Vishwanath, on the masnud. Bajirao was then but a boy, and therefore was deemed too young to be entrusted with the secrets of a plot which concerned him the most. The plot, however, was divulged and the conspirators were punished. Nana, though a jealous upholder of authority, resenting the slightest interference, was judicious enough not to include the sons of Raghoba among those who were charged with high treason. In punishing the intriguers, he left the family of Raghoba altogether unharmed. But the wary Brahman from that day kept a secret watch over Bajirao's movements, though as yet he had nothing to fear from the youth. Mahadji Sindhia still persisted in his policy of placing some serious obstacles in the way of Nana, thereby to hamper the growth of his power. It was even rumoured at the time that it was Mahadji who had instigated the partisans of Bajirao by way of a threat to Nana, and through him to the whole government. But in justice to Mahadji, it must be admitted that no fair case is made out to bring the charge home to him. The evidence that is forthcoming against him, may be considered enough to raise a suspicion

of his connivance; but it is insufficient to prove his implication.

Mahadji was then engaged in a more daring flight in Northern India, where he was vigorously carrying on measures which were calculated to raise him eventually to the highest pitch of his ambition. The august throne of Delhi, after the death of Aurangzeb, was occupied by a series of worthless princes, who, at the time of our narrative, were, like the Merovingian rulers in France, completely under the control of the 'Maires du palais'. Two rival favourites, Afrasiab Khan and Mahomed Beg, were quarrelling for supremacy at the Imperial Court. The former appealed to the English for assistance, but they refused to interfere; whereupon he invited Mahadji to proceed to his succour. Mahadji, since the peace of Salbai, had grown very powerful, and the Rajput princes of Malwa had become his feudatories one after the other. The strong fortress of Gwalior was surrendered to him by the Rájá of Gohad. Sindhia readily responded to the appeal of Afrasiab, and marched straight with his troops towards Delhi. He took possession of the Imperial palace without any difficulty and retained the old Emperor under his own protection. The Emperor offered him the grand title of Amir-ul-Umra, but Sindhia declined the honour for himself, though he obtained for his master the Peshwa the title of Vakeel-i-Mootlaq. The exaltation of the Peshwa at the Imperial Court highly flattered the Marathas, though Nana Phadnavis secretly probed into the deeper designs of Sindhia, and began to grow jealous of his increasing influence. Tukaji Holkar, also, who was working out in conjunction with Sindhia his own independence in the North, now began to be jealous of his colleague's power. By this time Hastings, no longer at the head of the Indian Administration, had left this country for good; and before Lord Cornwallis, the Governor-General elect, assumed charge, the government was carried on by MacPherson, the senior member of the Council. Mahadji,

intoxicated with the excessive power he wielded, claimed from the Bengal Government, on behalf of the Emperor, the payment of chouth for their possessions in Bengal. The English naturally took umbrage at such an insolent demand of Mahadji, and began to devise means to snub him. After the ratification of the peace of Salbai, Sindhia had acted as English envoy at the court of the Peshwa; and this distinction conferred upon him by the English Government was highly flattering to his sense of self-importance. MacPherson thought that the deprivation of that confidence would bring Sindhia to his senses, and for this purpose he resorted to Nana, who was but too willing to form a party to any scheme formed to degrade his rival in power. Nana, deadly opposed to the nomination of an English envoy at the Poona Court, was however obliged to give up his principles that he might see his long-cherished object—the humiliation of Sindhia—partially accomplished. He applied to the Supreme Government to have an English envoy appointed at the Poona Court. Charles Malet was the person chosen: and in order to obtain the acquiescence of Sindhia, the new envoy was sent to Mahadji's camp. The Maratha prince saw through the plan; and he expressed his disapproval of the sudden step taken by the Government.

Tipu, styled the tiger of Mysore, was not sleeping in his lair composedly after making the short truce with Nizamali. He was racking his brain to find out some means by which he could crush both the Marathas and the Nizam, and eventually turn out the English usurpers from India. Tipu saw that the task which he proposed to himself was a Herculean one, which single-handed he could never accomplish. He therefore resorted to the French, the hereditary foes of the English both in Europe and India. The French had once indulged in the dreams of establishing an empire in the East, but they were rudely disturbed in those pleasant dreams and awakened to the stern realities by their sturdy foes—the English.

Noorgoon, a small hill-fort in the vicinity of Tipu's dominions, soon became the scene of open hostilities. Tipu asked from its proprietor, a Brahman Desai, the payment of an exorbitant sum of money. The Desai appealed to Nana for support and protection, being a Maratha landlord and a subject of the Peshwa. Nana readily acceded to his request, and sent a large army to interpose on his behalf. On refusal of the payment, Tipu sent a large contingent to take possession of that small hill-fort; but the task proved not so easy as he had anticipated, the fort being strongly defended by the Marathas. Noorgoon could not be taken in the face of such opposition. An amicable settlement was soon after effected between Tipu Sultan and Nana Phadnavis on behalf of the Brahman Desai, by which personal safety was guaranteed to the landlord and his family. Tipu was as unscrupulous in giving promises as in breaking them. Hardly had the Maratha army retired from the vicinity of Noorgoon, when Tipu treacherously besieged the fort, seized it, and along with it the Desai and his family. The poor Brahman and his wife were basely murdered in a prison, and their fair daughter was conveyed to the Royal seraglio. The Mussalmans from the days of Mahomed, their great prophet, have evinced an amount of bigotry unprecedented in the annals of the world. The followers of the Faith, with the Koran in one hand and a sword in the other, are known to have incessantly made inroads upon distant territories and forced the people to embrace Islamism, while they mercilessly put to the sword the obstinate recusants. Those who did not belong to their faith were considered by them Kafirs and infidels unfit to live in this world. A pyramid formed of thousands of such infidel heads often became a subject of great national pride to this bigoted race. Tipu inherited not a little of that bigotry, and he lost no opportunity in perverting thousands of helpless Hindoos, as well as Christians, to the Moslem faith. At this time Tipu resorted to the wild caprice of circumcising a great many

Hindus against their will, and many a Brahman perished by his own hands to escape the degradation which would overtake both his body and soul.

Nana Phadnavis, himself a great master of dissimulation, was much mortified when he found that he was simply duped by the false promises of the Mussalman tyrant, and he made up his mind to wreak a befitting vengeance. He knew that Tipu had formed an alliance with that formidable power, the French, and that he had himself some well disciplined troops in his service. At the same time he was also aware that his ally, the Nizam, had no efficient army which could be of any use to him. His mind therefore naturally turned towards the English, whom he knew to be always at daggers drawn with the French. Nana had some scruples, however, in inviting the foreigners to settle Indian disputes; but these scruples were for a short time set aside. He therefore despatched an envoy to Bombay urging the Government to assist the Marathas with an English contingent. In return for that service Nana promised them two of the best sea-ports out of Tipu's dominions. The Bombay Government were the old and inveterate foes of Nana Phadnavis, and had suffered much at the hands of that wily Brahman. They therefore did not place great reliance on the promises so liberally held out by him. The Bombay Council, without taking any decisive step, forwarded the written statement of Nana to the Supreme Government, and anxiously awaited their final decision. The English envoy at the Court of Poona, though appointed long ago, had not yet arrived, and all communications between the Peshwa and the Supreme Government were carried on through Mahadji Sindhia as was arranged at the peace of Salbai. Nana urged Mahadji to make a strong representation at Calcutta, and gain the active co-operation of the English in their ensuing struggles with Tipu, who, he assured him, was strongly supported by a French force. Mahadji argued, that by the peace of Salbai the enemies of the Peshwa must be looked upon by the English as their

own enemies, and they were therefore morally bound to support the Marathas against their enemy. But the English were not a little afraid of Tipu, and dreaded the consequences of setting aside the treaty of Mangalore, however degrading it was to the English name. The India Government answered that by the treaty of Salbai it was never meant to be understood that the foes of one should also be deemed the foes of the other, but that neither of the engaging parties should afford any assistance to the enemies of the other. They also represented that they could not support the Marathas against Tipu, bound as they were by the treaty of Mangalore not to render any assistance to his enemies. MacPherson expressed his full sympathy with the Peshwa, and promised to help him in case of any emergency which might threaten the Marathas with destruction. Nana Phadnavis was grieved to find that the negotiations which he had opened with the English had such a fruitless termination. He had not the courage to oppose Tipu single-handed. He therefore laid the matter before the Portuguese Vakeel, who encouraged him, and held out assurances of bringing as many troops as he wanted.[1] Nana Phadnavis had good reasons to believe that Tipu was constantly receiving powerful succours from France. He looked upon the French envoy at the Poona Court with evident marks of suspicion. The envoy exerted his utmost skill in diplomacy to assure him that he was labouring under a false impression. Nana also opened negotiations with the French, and promised them the cession of Rewadanda if they ceased all communications with the Mysore Court. After those diplomatic preparations the Maratha army marched against Tipu and opened a campaign, attended with varied results. Nana accompanied the army in person, for a short distance, with the object of holding a conference with Nizamali on the frontier. The Marathas besieged a fort in the possession of Tipu; but the latter, instead of opposing the army,

[1] Malet's Diary.

went over with a detachment of his own forces to a hill-fort belonging to Nizamali in which were then residing the wives of the Nizam and his brother. After several engagements the campaign terminated in a treaty signed between Tipu and the Marathas with their ally the Nizam. Charles Malet, who had long since been appointed English envoy at the Poona Court, joined the Maratha camp exactly at this time. Malet, instead of going direct to Poona, was requested by Nana to join the Maratha army. This trick of Nana had its desired effect. Tipu began to suspect the active co-operation of the English with the Marathas. He resented the non-observance of the treaty of Mangalore on the part of the English by their supposed alliance with the Marathas; and from that day he persisted, with all the folly of a fanatic, in devising schemes for the total annihilation of the British power in India. The appointment of Charles Malet at the Poona Court, at the same time gave offence to Mahadji Sindhia, who till then reigned supreme at Poona; but he was so much occupied with the Imperial affairs at Delhi, that he had neither time nor inclination to care for such petty events in the South.

Mahadji Sindhia was well-nigh firmly established in the North. The weak descendant of Baber was completely under his control. Sindhia, however, did not rest content with subjugating the fierce Mussalman chieftains in the neighbourhood. He turned his now-disengaged sword against those warlike tribes whose ancestors had once stemmed the tide of universal conquest of the Macedonian hero, Alexander the Great. Mahadji, as a mark of his superiority, attempted to levy tribute from the heroic scion of the Sesodias descended from the great Bappa Rawal, then ruling at Udepoor, and from other Rajput chiefs. His own followers disapproved of this course, and they in large numbers deserted him at the most critical moment. Under such circumstances Sindhia had to withdraw. It is alleged that Nana Phadnavis had a secret hand in this contest. He is said to have opened

secret negotiations with the Maharájá of Jeypoor with the main object of depriving Mahadji of the immense influence his sword had won for him at Delhi. Sindhia, not suspecting Nana's complicity, wrote an eloquent letter to him, appealing to him for assistance against the Rajputs, who, he said, were to be supported by an English detachment. He dwelt upon the immense danger to which the Maratha empire was then exposed, and he completely disavowed the jealousy which popular rumour attributed to him towards Nana and his master the Peshwa. He also requested Nana to eradicate even the slightest traces of jealousy from his mind. "We serve a common master," he wrote, "let our exertions be directed towards the common cause. If you personally entertain jealousy of me, ask yourselves who supported you against the factions of Moroba and put your rival Sakharam Bapu in your power. Who suppressed the insurrection of the pretended Bhow,[1] beat the English at Tullygaon, maintained a great share in the war against them, and concluded an advantageous peace? Think of these services, banish suspicion, and silence calumniators who are our mutual enemies. Let the cause of the Maratha nation be upheld in Hindusthan, and prevent our empire from being disunited and overthrown."

Nana Phadnavis was, however, inexorable. The main object of Nana's policy was to uphold the power of the Peshwa and form a general Maratha confederacy under his auspices. The conduct of Mahadji Sindia, hitherto, had amply shown that he was steadily working his way to entire independence, and howsoever inclined Nana was to support the Maratha cause, which was tottering in the North, he could not bear the idea of sending succour to his political opponent. But he had not enough personal boldness to

[1] He was a Brahman from Kanouj. He said he was Sadashivrao Bhow, and had escaped unhurt from the field of Paniput, and not been killed there, as was generally supposed. He came with a vast army, but was defeated and thrown into prison, where he was starved to death.

break openly with Mahadji. Outwardly he made all preparations to despatch a reinforcement to Sindhia's troops. In reality, however, he wanted to direct the prepared detachment to Rajasthan, to treat with the Rajput princes, in the name of the Peshwa, independently of Mahadji, and thus to enhance the Peshwa's influence with the Rajputs in the North. This policy of Nana was calculated to secure all his purposes. Sindhia was promised a detachment which was already ordered to the North, the goodwill of the Rajputs was enlisted in the Peshwa's cause and the inordinately increasing power of Sindhia was sufficiently checked. Nana, however, soon found a pretext to withdraw his detachment which was required in the operations against the ambitious Tipu.

Tipu Sultan broke the engagement, which he had lately made with the Marathas, and invaded their possessions in the Concan. Nana had no other alternative but to resort to the Supreme Government at Calcutta. In England the famous India Bill which had overthrown the powerful coalition ministry of Fox, had already passed into law, and its framer, William Pitt, the son of the Great Commoner, had distinctly laid down that the British power in India should cease making alliances with one Native power against the other. Lord Cornwallis was sent to India with special instructions to put a prompt check to all intestine warfare, and preserve unbroken peace as far as was consistent with the good name and fame of Britain. Lord Cornwallis combined within him the courage of a soldier with the foresight of a statesman. Circumstances in India at once convinced him that the British nation could no longer remain silent spectators. But the time for any decisive action had not come, for Tipu had not yet broken any of the stipulations of the treaty of Mangalore. The Governor-General was not therefore in a position to readily accept the overtures of Nana but at the same time he instructed Malet to give Nana every assurance of mutual friendship and sincere desire to maintain it under all circumstances.

Meanwhile, affairs with Nizamali demanded the immediate attention of the India Government. A treaty was signed between the Nizam and the English in 1768, by which the former promised the cession of Guntoor, after the death of its holder Basalutjung, the Nizam's brother. The English Government passed orders to seize Guntoor by force. Thereupon Nizamali appealed to the Mysore chief to assist him as a brother-Moslem against the infidels. Tipu readily acceded to all the terms of the Nizam, but as a preliminary to any definite treaty, he sought in marriage the hand of the fair daughter of Nizamali. The true Tartar blood boiled within the veins of the scion of the great Nizam-ul-Mulk, who highly resented such an impudent demand from a Musalman upstart, the son of a mere Naik. Thus the offer of mutual conciliation resulted in the aggravation of their hatred for each other. Tipu again had formed some designs against the territories of his neighbour and co-religionist; hence he arrogantly declined to interfere in the Nizam's feud with the English. The hostile designs of Tipu against the English and the neighbouring chiefs owning allegiance to them now began to be evident and alarming. The Rájá of Travancore was an ally of the English against whom Tipu first directed his arms. The sagacious and energetic Governor-General without any hesitation entered into an alliance, offensive and defensive, both with the Peshwa and the Nizam against their common foe. Lord Cornwallis, though he broke the letter of the famous Pitt's India Bill, preserved its spirit, which decidedly was of greater importance. Even Dundas, the father of the non-intervention policy, admitted that "an alliance with the Marattas of the closest kind was all that was requisite to keep the whole world in awe respecting India."

A protracted campaign followed at first under the command of General Medows, and later on the Governor-General himself took the field. He led the allied troops to the very gates of Shrirangapattan; but had to withdraw owing to a

deficiency in the supplies. Tipu in his difficulty appealed to the French king Louis XVI., who remarked: "This resembles the affairs of America, of which I never think without regret. My youth was taken advantage of at that time, and we suffer for it now; the lesson is too severe to be forgotten." No assistance came, and the campaign closed with a treaty highly disadvantageous to Tipu. He was compelled to cede vast territories to the English and their allies and to send two of his sons as hostages. When Nana withdrew the detachment promised to Sindhia under the circumstances mentioned above, Mahadji asked the Governor-General to supply him with an European contingent to protect his possessions in Malwa, while he was engaged in the North against the Rajputs. Lord Cornwallis rejected the demand, which greatly offended him. He at once withdrew from the general confederacy and opened negotiations with Tipu. He proceeded to Poona to prejudice the mind of the young Peshwa against his rivals.

When Mahadji was on his way to Poona, various rumours were afloat as to the motive of his sudden and unexpected march to the capital. Of the various conjectures, one lay very near the truth, namely, that Mahadji had in view the control of the Brahmans and the firm establishment of his own supreme authority at the Peshwa's court. Mahadji had obtained for his master the insignia of Vakeel-i-Mootlaq from the nominal Emperor at Delhi. He proceeded to Poona with the avowed object of presenting the insignia and the dress of honour to the Brahman prince, though the real motive was to bring about the recall of Holkar. Nana was shrewd enough to clearly perceive the deeper designs of Sindhia, and tried his best to prevent Mahadji's approach to the capital. Nana argued that the *faineant* Emperor of Delhi was totally dependent upon one of the vassals of the Peshwa, even for his daily maintenance, and any title coming from such a monarch should not be accepted by so great a potentate as the Peshwa. The young

Peshwa, however, had a childlike fancy for such tawdry baubles. He fixed a day for the investiture of the insignia of the most exalted order of Vakeel-i-Mootlaq from the Emperor of India. Mahadji arrived at Poona and encamped at the junction of the Mulla and Mutha rivers. Nana Phadnavis, foiled in his attempts to keep Sindhia away from Poona, now saw that his safety rested on feigning compliance with Sindhia's motives, and after a few days he even paid him a formal visit at his camp. Mahadji received him with the greatest cordiality. "Hatred and revenge, though ate into his heart, yet every look was a cordial smile, every gesture a familiar caress." Mahadji Sindhia did not even sit upon his throne in the presence of the great Brahman minister. He had brought with him many curious nicknacks from Delhi and other places in the North, which greatly pleased the young Peshwa. Sindhia by such means succeeded in creating a very favourable impression on the Peshwa's mind. The ceremony of investing the Peshwa with the royal insignia was performed with the greatest eclat. A superb dress of honour, several costly ornaments, elephants, caparisoned horses, palanquins, and the Royal standards of Mâhi and Murátab were then presented to Madhavrao Narayan. This was simply gratifying to that childish heart, easily exciteable at such a pageant. Mahadji was appointed Deputy to the Peshwa by the Emperor and he was invested with that power in a full Durbar held at the Royal palace at Poona. During these ceremonies Sindhia affected great humility. These affectations may and did deceive a young heart such as the Peshwa had, but they could not throw old and experienced Nana off his guard.

Madhavrao Narayan, a high-spirited youth, was quite taken in by the graceful and unreserved manners of Sindhia. Nana had, on the other hand, hitherto adopted a strange policy of controlling the free actions of the Peshwa, and kept him as a mere State-prisoner. He had no doubt, in accordance with the Peshwa's wishes, formed a museum of various

birds and beasts for his amusement. But generally his behaviour was cold and severe, with due, rather strict, observance of decorum and propriety. It was but natural, therefore, that the young Peshwa sought frequently the pleasant society of Sindhia and shunned that of his sedate minister. Sindhia soon became to him a *bon-vivant*. Parties and picnics followed in quick succession in which the young Peshwa took part with natural and unfettered gaiety. Nana could not bear to see the influence of his rival increasing. He kept such a vigilant eye on the movements of Mahadji that it was impossible for Sindhia to get an opportunity of talking freely or revealing his real motives to the Peshwa without being observed by the secret spies of Nana. Mahadji Sindhia frequently assured the Peshwa that he had the power to release him from the bondage, if only the latter had the will to be free from the tutelage of his minister. Madhavrao gave him no countenance at first. Once while returning from the Parvati, the Peshwa alighted from his elephant and began gaily to cross the small lake in his little skiff. There was none by his side except Sindhia. Mahadji, thinking that the time for pressing his demand had come, repeated his willingness to serve as the Peshwa's minister. The Peshwa, not willing to part with Nana, pleasantly answered: "Nana is my right arm, my left is Mahadji Sindhia. As long as both my arms are safe, I can enjoy my life without any anxiety for my throne." Sindhia was discomfited and returned no answer. Thus though a tempting inducement was held forth to the generous youth, he had such an implicit confidence in his old minister that he discouraged all attempts of Sindhia to render him independent of Nana. The Peshwa, young though he was, had intelligence enough to perceive that the change of hands would be like going out of Scylla and falling into Charybdis. Nana, when he came to know of what had passed between his young master and the aspiring rival, went direct to Madhavrao, and appealed strongly both

to his feelings and judgment. At the same time he sent Haripant Tatya to the camp of Sindhia to assure him of his goodwill towards him. To the Peshwa he recounted the many valuable services he had rendered to his whole State in general and to his own person in particular. He described the aggressive policy of Mahadji, which, he said, would some day prove dangerous to the whole Maratha Empire. He also drew the attention of his young master to the foreign troops engaged by Mahadji under the great military adventurer DeBoigne, and thus pointed out to him the ruling passion of his heart, the establishment of an absolute power over the Brahman sovereignty. After these observations he contrasted his own difficult situation with the easy circumstances of Mahadji, and pointed out his own inability to thwart the dangerous schemes of Sindhia without the co-operation of the Peshwa. Nana Phadnavis at last burst out into tears, and tendering his resignation declared his intention to proceed to Benares, and pass the remainder of his life in unswerving devotion to God. The noble youth was touched deeply. He asked his old minister to forgive the frivolities of an innocent child, and entreated him not to desert him and leave him unprotected to the tender mercies of his personal foes. Mahadji Sindhia, when he saw that all his schemes were thus in a moment frustrated by his rival, threw off the mask and boldly demanded the recall of Holkar and other Mânkaries. Nana declined to comply with his demand. This much aggravated their mutual jealousy. Each party began to devise means for the overthrow of the other.

While such was the state of affairs at the Poona Court, Mahadji Sindhia died all of a sudden in February 1794. This unexpected occurrence changed the aspect of Maratha affairs in Hindusthan. The one great passion which had ruled Mahadji throughout his life was his jealousy of the ever-increasing influence of the Brahmans at the court of the Peshwa. In his schemes he always assisted one Brahman against the other, and devised the destruction of him

whom he had employed as his tool before. "Mahadji was a man of great political sagacity and of considerable genius, of deep artifice, of restless ambition, and of implacable revenge. With a high opinion of his personal address, he generally failed when he attempted to exercise it, and in ebullitions of anger, to which he was prone, he frequently exposed what he most wished to conceal". Mahadji died without any issue; but his adopted son Daulatrao, his grand-nephew, succeeded him to the masnud. He was then but a minor, which circumstance gave Nana full scope to exercise his control over the whole Maratha nation without any opposition.

Lord Cornwallis sailed for England in 1793, leaving the reins of government in the hands of Sir John Shore, afterwards created Lord Teignmouth. The new Governor-General deprecated the policy of unwisely interfering with the internal affairs of other rival powers which his predecessor had adopted. Nana, now that he ruled supreme over the whole Maratha Empire, at this time directed his attention towards another of his neighbours, Nizamali. He made demands upon the Nizam for the outstanding balances of Chouth and Surdeshmookhee, which amounted to a very large sum. Nizamali in return made several demands upon the Marathas and accused them of treachery. These demands and accusations were answered by Nana in a cleverly drawn up State paper. Owing to some secret cause,[1] however, the quarrel was hastened, and the result of it was an

1 The secret cause was an insult offered to the Peshwa and his minister Nana by Nizamali and his minister Mushir-ul-Mulk. The Maratha envoy was once invited to an amateur theatrical performance at the Nizam's court. Comical representations of the Peshwa and Nana were exhibited on the stage; whereupon Govindrao, the envoy, took offence, and vowed in the presence of all to retaliate adequately this disrespectful behaviour towards the mighty Maratha throne. He indignantly withdrew from the court declaring that his wrath would only be appeased when he had made the Nizam and his minister trudge along from street to street imploring forgiveness at every door in Poona.

inevitable war. Nizamali appealed to the English to assist him against the Peshwa. Sir John Shore, though not wanting in personal courage, was not equal to the occasion. He was a strong advocate of the non-intervention policy and therefore declined to interfere in the matter. The Nizam had no course left but to fight the Marathas unaided. He raised a large army and placed it under the command of one M. Raymond, a Frenchman of high position. The envoys sent by Nana to the court of Hyderabad had a long dicussion with the minister of Nizamali on several unreasonable demands set down by Nana. At last Mushir-ul-Mulk declared that Nana Phadnavis must personally attend the court and produce a satisfactory solution of some of the knotty points in the claim. The envoy replied that Nana was much occupied in his own affairs, and that he could not come. "How can he come?" rejoined the Moslem. "I shall soon show how he shall be brought to our presence."

This was equivalent to a declaration of war, and the hostile armies marched towards the frontiers. The Mussalmans as usual were over-confident of success. The army was commanded by Nizamali in person. He was accompanied by his whole zenana. The vulgar soldiery were delighted at the approaching prospect of pillage. So sure were they each and all of a decided triumph, that the minister pompously read in the Durbar the following declaration: "The Moguls should now be freed from the Maratha encroachments; that they should recover Bijapoor and Khandesh or they would never grant peace until they had despatched the Peshwa to Benares with a cloth about his loins and a pot of water in his hand to mutter incantations on the banks of the Ganges." Nana Phadnavis had also made formidable preparations, and a vast army was raised with the help of the resources sent in by the Bhonslay and the Gaekwad, Sindhia, Holkar, and other Maratha chiefs. Nana and Madhavrao Narayan accompanied the army which marched against the Musalmans. The rival armies met near the

village of Kurdla (Kharda). A battle ensued, in which the Mogul army at the outset displayed great bravery, and the Marathas had to fall back. Nana, who was watching the fight from a distance with the Peshwa, thought that the day was irretrievably lost. In despair he sent instructions to Sindhia and other generals to exert their utmost, for all his hopes, he said, rested with them. The Maratha generals, not despairing of success, re-assured Nana of their fidelity. The Marathas fought with the courage of despair, and at last their valour was crowned with success. The Nizam's cavalry displayed great pusillanimity by flying away from the battlefield. Nizamali was pent up in the fort of Kharda surrounded by the enemies. He had now no alternative left except to submit. A peace was concluded between the rival powers by which the Nizam was forced to cede a vast portion of his dominions to the Peshwa, to guarantee the payment of all outstanding balances, and to give up his minister Mushir-ul-Mulk to the Peshwa as hostage. This last stipulation, which Nana insisted upon to avenge the insult mentioned above,[1] the Nizam was very loath to grant. Such, however, were the splendour and the magnitude of the Maratha victory, and such the total wreck of the Mogul army, that the Nizam readily acceded to all these stipulations, humiliating though they were to the Musalman power. Mushir-ul-Mulk volunteered to go to the hostile camp ; thereby he facilitated the progress of the negotiations. Such was the campaign of Kharda, sung in many a martial ballad even at the present day ; "and it is one of the greatest boasts of the old Silledars in the Maratha villages, that they were present in the glorious field of Kurdla."

The prosperity of Nana Phadnavis after the great victory at Kharda had reached its zenith. He had succeeded in obtaining his long cherished object, an uncontrolled supremacy at the Poona Court and the Maratha chiefs dancing attendance

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[1] See ante, page 57 footnote.

upon him. Daulatrao Sindhia was but a minor. His old officers, who had served under Mahadji and were conscious of the rivalry that had existed between the Brahman minister and their departed lord, were all wise enough to conform to the times in which they lived: they were naturally more mindful of their own interest than of any fruitless scheme of increasing their influence at the Poona Court. Tukaji Holkar had grown infirm both in body and mind, while his dependents were always in the interest of Nana. Raghoji Bhonslay was brought over to Nana's faction and other Brahman Mânkaries were subservient to Nana and his cause. Everything presented fair prospects; and the Peshwa's government under the able administration of Nana, undisturbed by any internal feuds, promised to regain that tranquillity and vigour which had characterised the reign of the great Madhavrao I. But 'there is a tide in the affairs of men,' and Nana persisted in his policy of inordinate ambition, never for a moment relaxing his sway over the young Peshwa. Little did Nana know that this very shortsighted policy, which he had till then adopted, would bring about an undreamt-of catastrophe, destroy in one single moment the fruit of his lifelong labour, heap upon him misery and disgrace, and leave him ever after in the possession of a mere skeleton of his former greatness. Little did he dream that he would only be released from further troubles and ignominy by merciful Death.

Madhavrao Narayen had now attained his twenty-first year, and yet Nana Phaduavis grudged his youthful ward that great boon of life, enjoyed by all men from the prince in his palace to the peasant in his cottage—Liberty of action. Nana became more and more suspicious of the designs of his partisans, and as he advanced in years scrupulously watched the movements of his master and his young friends. Anandibai, the wife of Raghoba, who played so important a part in the early stages of our narrative, but who was later on reduced to a mere non-entity at Kopergaon, was long since

dead. Her sons were removed from that residence and lodged at the hill-fort of Junnar. There also Nana's jealousy pursued them. By his orders they were kept under strict surveillance. This uncalled for severity towards innocent youths lowered Nana very much in the eyes of reasonable men. From that day the glory of Nana began to wane.

Bajirao, the eldest of Raghoba's sons, possessed that intelligence which could not but be an object of jealousy to the all-puissant Nana. "Graceful in his person, with a handsome and youthful countenance, which ensured favourable impressions, Bajirao had the mildest manner and an address so insinuating that he gained the goodwill of all who approached him." He, in that very tender age, combined in him the rare accomplishments of a ruler with those of a good soldier. Madhavrao Narayen came to learn, from time to time, of his popularity and his attainments. The youth was magnanimous enough not to be jealous of his cousin's fame. He had the generosity to express his desire for his unfortunate cousin's release, though he was much afraid of Nana, and could not give vent to his desire in public. He expressed his wish to form a friendship with the amiable youth. This Nana tried his utmost to prevent. In vain did Nana expostulate with his master to be always on his guard against that "sapling, however comely, which sprang from the weakness of Raghunathrao and the wickedness of Anandibai." Bajirao had his agents working secretly at the Court, who daily kept him well informed of the proceedings which took place at Poona. Nana had employed two of his most confidential men to keep a strict watch over the person as well as the actions of Bajirao and his brothers. The future Peshwa had by his winning manners produced a favourable impression on the mind of one of his jailors, who was soon won over to his cause. He soon after became a ready instrument in facilitating a regular correspondence between the two cousins. The first letter addressed by Bajirao to Madhavrao was couched in most pathetic

terms which deeply moved the helpless Peshwa. "He was in confinement at Sewneree, and the Peshwa under the control of his minister; that their condition as prisoners was nearly similar; but that their minds and affections were free and should be devoted to each other; that their ancestors had distinguished themselves, and that the time would arrive when his cousin and himself might hope to emulate their deeds and raise for themselves a lasting and honourable name."

The communication between the two cousins could not long be kept secret from the ever-watchful minister. When he learnt that letters were occasionally passing between his state-prisoner at Sewneree and his sovereign, he burst into a fit of violent anger. Madhavrao was stung to the quick at the inuendoes made by his cousin. He made up his mind to free himself from the restraint of his minister at any sacrifice. He began to grow more sedate, and mental depression soon overtook him.[1] He began to take a pessimistic view of the whole world and of his miserable life. No longer could he

"bear the whips and scorns of time,
"The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely."

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[1] The Maratha historians ascribe this sudden change in the Peshwa's body and mind to a very mystic and phantastic cause. Bajirao, who was closely confined at Junnar, began to operate some mystic rites on the person of his cousin the Peshwa. The Brahmans at the completion of their religious ceremonies gave a talisman to Bajirao, saying that if Madhavrao were simply to touch that magical talisman he would lose his senses and turn a maniac. But the difficulty lay in "belling the cat." Who would go to the Shrimant and show him the talisman and ask him to touch it? One Balvantrao, who was placed there to keep watch on Bajirao's movements, and who had turned out a turn-coat, volunteered to take the charm to Poona. He had free access to the Peshwa's apartments, for the Peshwa and Nana had full confidence in his fidelity. He went to Poona: and always waited on his Majesty for about a fortnight without doing anything for want of a favourable opportunity. Once seeing Madhavrao Narayen all alone he drew out the charmed talisman from his pocket, and placed it before the unsuspecting Peshwa. The youth thereupon, through curiosity, touched it, and from that day began to grow disconsolate.

He remained confined to his private apartments; and refused all attendance. He no longer took any part in the public affairs of the State. Nana Phadnavis attributed this to his sudden and serious illness. For the last time the unfortunate youth made his amiable appearance among his beloved subjects on the Dussera holiday. Even then he wore a gloomy countenance, deeply ruffled by an inward conflict between life and death. His brain seemed to be seriously affected. In such a miserable state of mind Madhavrao Narayen remained for a couple of days, and on the third day after the Dussera (25th October 1795), while sitting in an inner room with Durgabai, his maternal grandmother, and some Brahmans, he complained of the heat, got up suddenly and went to an adjoining terrace. In a fit of desperation he threw himself down. He happened to fall on the spout of a fountain which pierced through his body and wounded him mortally. The wound proved fatal, and the lineal heir of the great Balaji Wishwanath perished by his own hands in the flower of youth. Even on his death-bed that noble youth did not forget his cousin whom he declared to be his successor.

Nana Phadnavis must have felt the greatest grief at the sudden death of one whom he loved as his own child and over whom he possessed an unlimited influence. There lay before him a gloomy prospect which he was the chief agent in bringing about. There was none but himself to blame for the mischief wrought. Nana had now to prepare himself for the worst consequences that were inevitably to follow. Madhavrao Narayen had at the last moment expressed his wish that Bajirao should succeed him on the masnud. Hard fate was staring sternly at Nana's face. He resolved to break the solemn wish of his late master although this was a dangerous game for him to play. Nothing daunted, he called together all the Maratha feudatories in the Royal palace, but deliberately concealed from them the last wish of the late Peshwa. He reminded those who were assembled round him of the

great disasters and miseries they had once suffered at the hands of the infamous Raghoba. He also related to them the implacable hatred which Raghoba bore towards them all, which feeling must have naturally descended from the father to the son and must have been strengthened by the evil genius of the intractable Anandibai. The chief object of Nana in thus forcing upon their minds the recollection of the gloomy past was to excite their hatred against Bajirao and enlist their sympathies in a scheme which he had already devised. Yeshodabai, the unfortunate widow of the late Peshwa, had not attained even her maturity, yet Nana wished her to adopt a son in whose name he promised to carry on the government as he had hitherto done. But there appeared on the stage a strong opponent in the person of Balloba Tatia, one of the leading ministers of Daulatrao Sindhia. His objections were however overruled by his colleague Juba Bakshi; and the bold proposal of Nana Phadnavis was approved of by all the Maratha chiefs. The English Political Resident at the court of Poona naturally expressed a desire to know upon what principle the government was in future to be conducted. Nana replied that the government would be carried on by a Council of Regency with Yeshodabai at its head, during the minority of a boy whom she was shortly going to adopt in accordance with the unanimous wish of the Maratha powers. The English Resident expressed his satisfaction at the arrangement proposed and communicated it to the Bombay Government, who also approved of the scheme.

Bajirao, when he learnt that intrigues were rife at the Poona Court to set him aside, appealed to Daulatrao through his minister Balloba Tatia, whom he knew to be in his interests. Juba Bakshi was, fortunately for him, now dead for some time past and Balloba reigned supreme in the councils of the young Sindhia. Bajirao in his letter to him promised him an extensive territory in case he was successful in obtaining the masnud. Such a tempting offer was

readily and willingly accepted and a formal agreement was signed by both the parties. Nana had his detectives abroad in all directions, and before the plot was matured, it was revealed to him. It was really a critical moment, but Nana was equal to the occasion. He proposed to outwit Sindhia in his own plans, and forthwith proceeded with his business. He sent his friend Parshuram Bhow to Sewneree to release Bajirao and his brothers, promise the masnud to the former, and bring them over to Poona. When Parshuram made his appearance before the prison and divulged his mission, Amritrao advised his brother not to trust Nana, their inveterate foe. Bajirao hesitated for a time, but having received solemn oaths and pledges from the Bhow, he followed him to the capital. Bajirao after his arrival at Poona had a conference with Nana. They both agreed to let the dead past bury its dead and to look only to the future. Bajirao after some days wrote the following letter to Nana:

"In the presence of my God and from the inmost recesses of my heart have I rooted out every vestige of any former act. Let all your future conduct be guided by the principles of good faith. I will never injure you or yours by word or deed, by any inward thought or outward act; neither will I allow any other person to do so. On this point will I be inflexible, and will pay no attention to the suggestions of others. I will not allow your reputation to be sullied, and should any one attempt to instil anything of the kind into my breast, I will point him out to you. I will never release from confinement any one without your advice. All State affairs shall be managed by our conjunct counsel. From this day all your acts are mine. Suspicion is wholly eradicated from my breast."

Balloba Tatia thus found himself outwitted in his intrigues by the most opportune and masterly stroke of Nana Phadnavis. He was deeply incensed, and resolved in his turn to thwart the machinations of Nana Phadnavis by setting aside

both Nana and Bajirao, whose cause he had so lately made his own. He advised his master Daulatrao to march with his troops to Poona and frighten Nana and his adherents. Nana had little personal courage, and fearing the worst he repaired to Bajirao and told him that it was he who was the cause of all the strife and civil dissensions. As the best means of averting the impending misfortune he proposed to retire from the government, and even from Poona, where his personal safety was in danger. Parshuram Bhow, who was at the head of the Peshwa's army and a thorough-going adherent of Nana, advised him not to leave Poona. But Nana was frightened out of his wits; and without paying any attention to his friend's advice left Poona and went over to Satara. Balloba now held the balance in his hands. He took Parshuram Bhow into his confidence, and determined between them that Yeshodabai should adopt Bajirao's younger brother Chimnaji Appa, and that the young boy should obtain through their instrumentality the Peshwa's robe. Parshuram Bhow was to carry on the administration during Chimnaji's minority. Bajirao was to be deposed and thrown into confinement. Parshuram Bhow was easily deceived by the exceedingly flattering attention shown to him. Nana Phadnavis had fallen low in his estimation owing to his recent pusillanimous flight; but he continued to entertain a very high opinion of his wisdom. To Nana he referred the matter for favour of advice. Nana Phadnavis advised him to accept what was proposed to him, but he especially warned him to keep the person of Bajirao in his own custody.

The restless soul of Nana did not remain quiet even at Satara. The descendant of the great Rájá Shivaji was a State prisoner completely under the control of the all-powerful Peshwa. Nana opened negotiations with this legitimate claimant to the Maratha throne. He promised the imprisoned Rájá to exert his utmost to extricate him from the Peshwa's thraldom. Nana had here to deal with men far different in their character from those with whom he had till

then come in contact at Poona, and on being convinced of the futility of his scheme, determined to abandon it altogether. He expressed his approval of Balloba's plan to set aside Bajirao and place the young boy Chimnaji on the musnad. He therefore returned to Satara to obtain for that boy the ceremonial dress of investiture. Had Nana, with the khilat, proceeded to Poona in person, he would have been entrapped into the snare, but his usual good sense stood him in good stead, and he gave up the idea of proceeding to the capital personally. He had instructed Parshuram to keep Bajirao under strict surveillance, but that officer, either through negligence or self-sufficiency, failed to act up to his advice, and permitted Balloba to retain the person of Bajirao. Nana suspected that some plot was set on foot for his destruction. He therefore sent over to Parshuram the dress of honour. Everything was so cleverly managed by Balloba and Parshuram that Bajirao was kept in complete darkness about the whole plot against his person. It was, however, revealed to him in a way characteristic of that age of intrigues. Daulatrao Sindhia had fallen short of cash, and asked Bajirao for supplies of money from the Poona treasury by way of return for the expenses incurred to raise him to the masnud. The treasury at Poona being equally empty, Bajirao expressed his inability to comply with Sindhia's wishes. Thereupon Sindhia asked permission to withdraw to Hindusthan. Bajirao went to his camp to pay him a parting visit. He was captured there and detained as a prisoner. Chimnaji Appa was soon carried to Poona and adopted by Yeshodabai. The tender conscience of the boy revolted when he was asked to assume the title of Peshwa in supersession of his elder brother; but his scruples were overruled and he was declared Peshwa under the title of Chimnaji Madhavrao.

One of the objects of Balloba and his partisans being fulfilled in the dethronement and the imprisonment of Bajirao, they now directed their undivided attention to

the attainment of the other object, the capture of their great political antagonist, Nana Phadnavis, who was now residing at Wai. Parsburam in his usual friendly manner wrote to Nana to abandon all self-created fears, leave Wai, and proceed to Poona to assume the civil administration of the State. But Nana was too cautious to be thus caught in the trap laid for him. He in reply urged Parshuram to send his eldest son to Wai to guarantee his personal safety. Haripant, the son of Parshuram, marched towards Wai, accompanied by a large army. Nana was informed by his spies at Poona of the real nature of the mission. He therefore left Wai secretly. The fortunes of the once powerful Nana waning day by day from that ill-fated hour when Madhavrao Narayen perished had now become alarmingly desperate. Nana had one great defect, personal timidity, which had often led him to adopt half-measures. Circumstances now compelled him to abandon all such measures. "The vigour of his judgment, the fertility of his expedients, the extent of his influence, and the combination of instruments which he called into action, surprised all India, and from his European contemporaries procured for him the name of the Maratha Machiavel." Thus did Nana bring into play all the resources he could command—and they were formidable indeed—to regain his former influence and position. A community of interests turns foes into friends; and so was it indeed with Nana Phadnavis and Bajirao, who now began to carry on secret intercourse between each other. All differences were forgotten under a common danger, and Bajirao sent a confidential messenger to him with many friendly assurances. Bajirao entreated him to exert his utmost on their mutual behalf, to regain their lost power, and put down their common enemies.

Nana had his partisans in the very palace at Poona, holding military commands, who promised their master to desert the cause of Balloba, and go over to his party

at the critical moment. Tukaji Holkar, though now an imbecile, had still a very strong sympathy for Nana. His officers were ready to act for the fallen minister, whenever their services were required. At the same time Nana opened negotiations with Daulatrao, through one of his old ministers Rayoji Patel, who was inimical to Balloba, offering vast and lucrative jagirs to the greedy Sindhia. Thus he had every engine set at work, and a sure success was anticipated. During these intricate negotiations and counter-negotiations, there appeared on the stage one destined to play an important part during the succeeding generation. This man was Shirzirao Ghatgay belonging to the Kugal family, who had entered into the service of Nana Phadnavis. Shirzirao became instrumental in gaining over Daulatrao to Nana's cause. Love completed that which was half done by diplomacy. Shirzirao had one fair daughter Baezabai, who was so charming that Sindhia undertook to marry her at all risks. The amours of sovereigns are recorded in histories of the world to have effected that which loss of innumerable lives in a bloody battle-field has often failed to accomplish. Balloba Tatia, contented with what he had already done in rendering his enemies helpless, remained inactive, quite unconscious of 'the inextricable web which Nana was weaving around him.' When he was aroused from his slumber, and when all the intrigues around him became too clear to escape his attention, he attributed them to Bajirao. He resolved upon removing him to Hindusthan as a prisoner. Shirzirao was now employed in Sindhia's service, and Balloba, confiding in his good faith, entrusted Bajirao to his care. But Shirzirao was an unprincipled rogue. Bajirao soon won him over to his cause. He feigned illness to put off his removal. By this time the scheme which was gradually maturing under Nana's careful eye was ready to be executed on the first favourable opportunity.

Nana entered into a negotiation with his neighbour Nizamali for military support in his attempt at resuming the

functions of the Premier and reinstating Bajirao on the gâdi. In return for these services he promised him a complete remission of the outstanding balances. That wary minister had not failed to secure the co-operation of the other Maratha chiefs. The English Government had also expressed their sympathy towards Bajirao, and had fully recognized his claims to the Peshwa's throne. The partisans of Balloba saw that all was lost, and there remained no chance of success. Flight to some secure place was the only course left to them. Parshuram Bhow left Poona taking with him the young boy Chimnaji Appa, but his enemies soon overtook him and he was compelled to surrender. Bajirao and Nana now met together, and with their combined troops marched towards Poona. But on the way some accident occurred which created in the mind of Nana grave suspicion as to the sincerity of Bajirao. He declined to proceed further, unless he received from Bajirao a written guarantee that his intentions were all friendly, that he meant no treachery towards him, and that in the event of his desiring to withdraw from civil administration, he would be permitted to retire unmolested to any place he liked, where he thought his life and property would be more secure. It was only after Nana received such a guarantee that he proceeded to Poona, and once more resumed the duties of a Karbhari (25th November 1796). The Peshwa's insignia having been received from Satara, Bajirao was seated upon the throne with regal pomp (December 1796). The adoption of Chimnaji Appa by Yashodabai was declared null and void, and the boy was forced to undergo certain purificatory ceremonies. The Brahmans who had officiated at the ceremony of adoption were excommunicated and banished from Poona.

The great confederacy of Nizamali and the Maratha chiefs which Nana had formed round him was seriously shaken by the demise of his old ally Tukoji Holkar (August 1797). He left behind him two illegitimate and two legitimate sons. Of the latter the elder was Khasserao,

who was simply an imbecile both in body and mind, and hence his younger brother Malharrao asserted his claim to the gadi. Nana Phadnavis favoured the cause of Malharrao; Khasserao therefore looked up to Sindhia for support. Sindhia was only too willing to interfere in the family dissensions of his rival. He sent a large army to support Khasserao against the armies of Malharrao. The whole camp of that prince was surrounded by the overwhelming troops of Sindhia. On his refusing to yield, a battle followed, in which Malharrao was slain. His half-brothers who had supported him escaped. This success of Sindhia placed the imbecile Khasserao under his control, and for a time Sindhia gained a complete ascendancy over the rival house of Holkar. This was a death-blow to the power of Nana Phadnavis. Bajirao, whose good manners and misfortunes had always won sympathy from the neighbouring powers, was believed to possess a very excellent disposition. The belief generally prevalent, of his goodness and wisdom, was the result of his talents for 'cajoling and deceiving'. From the very beginning his whole career was governed by two principles:—'to trust none, and to deceive all'. The only goal which he now aimed at was to free himself from the control of Daulatrao and Nana. The latter he regarded as the greater evil and to be first avoided; for, he thought that at any time he could free himself from Sindhia's grasp by persuading him to mind his own affairs in Hindusthan.

He entrusted the work of Nana's overthrow to the unscrupulous Ghatgay. Daulatrao had not yet married the fair daughter of Shirzirao, and Bajirao persuaded him that the overthrow of Nana was a necessary condition to the fulfilment of his long-cherished desire of becoming the minister of his son-in-law. It was decided that Nana should be thrown into confinement. But how could that Herculean task be accomplished? Nana had five thousand Arab mercenaries in his service. So strongly protected, how could that wary Brahman

be captured and imprisoned? The commanders of Sindhia's battalions—Messrs. Perron and Michael Filoze—undertook the task, and began devising means for Nana's capture. Nana was not long kept in ignorance of such a plot. He was warned by his friends not to repair to Sindhia's camp on any business whatever. But who could frustrate the inevitable but unknowable decree of God? Nana was destined to undergo an imprisonment for a short period, and who could counteract the mysterious Destiny? Nana, deaf to all the entreaties of his friends, set out on the 31st December, 1797, for Daulatrao's camp to pay him a formal visit. Many an ill-omen perturbed his naturally tranquil mind. He was warned by many a soothsayer not to go to Sindhia on that day as it was rather an unlucky one. But Nana was led on into the snare by his stern Destiny, and nothing could prevail upon him to change his intention. He was accompanied by his faithful Arabs, but Perron and Filoze, who had come so far to receive Nana, requested him to permit his soldiers to depart, for he was simply going on a friendly visit. Nana asked his men to return home, but the Jamadar replied: "We won't go back; you have up to this day provided us and our families, and we will be but true to our salt and shall not forsake you in the hour of difficulty." But they were entreated by Nana to retire, and, simply for the fear of displeasing their master, they reluctantly went back. Nana reached the camp and repaired to the reception tent. Daulatrao, an expert in the art of dissimulation, received him very kindly, and assured him of his friendship, but on his return he was seized by the Neapolitan Filoze. Thus was he caught in the trap laid out for him by Sindhia, who thus proved himself to be one of those "whose face is unruffled, whose speech is courteous till vigilance is laid asleep, till a sure aim is taken, and then he strikes for the first and the last time." Security of life was guaranteed to Nana, who silently followed the European officer. The houses of Nana and his adherents were plundered by the orders of the infamous

Ghatgay, and Poona presented the appearance of a city sacked by an enemy's infuriated host. The whole of Poona was panic-stricken, and "friends marched in groups with shields on their arms and swords in their hands." Just at the time that he was made a prisoner in Sindhia's camp, Bajirao sent for the leaders of Nana's faction, and ordered them to be placed in confinement. He was sent over, a prisoner, to the fort of Ahmudnagar, while his place was given by Bajirao to his half-brother Amritrao.

Bajirao, now that he had got rid of his greatest foe, turned his attention towards Daulatrao. But before he could do that, he had to fulfil the promises made to Shirzirao Ghatgay, whose fair daughter Baezabai was presently married to Daulatrao with regal splendour. The expenses incurred by Sindhia were enormous, and he once more made heavy demands upon Bajirao's treasury. Again he offered the same excuse; but permitted Sindhia's avaricious father-in-law, his new minister Ghatgay, to extort money from the wealthy inhabitants of his capital. A tiger was let loose upon a fold of humble sheep. The partisans of Nana were put to torture and all their wealth pillaged. Few escaped a similar hard fate, and many are said to have died under torture. The name of that monster of a Ghatgay will always be uttered in Poona with horror and execration. Amritrao, the Prime Minister, who was not privy to his brother's foul schemes, was much irritated at the brutal barbarity of Ghatgay, and attributed the pillage and oppression to Daulatrao Sindhia. He proposed a scheme for capturing Sindhia, to which Bajirao readily agreed. A battalion was formed under the command of an English officer, Mr. Tone, to cope with the more disciplined army of Sindhia. Daulatrao was summoned to the Court, but he absented himself. Thereupon Bajirao sent a peremptory order. Now he appeared before the Peshwa, who strongly reprimanded him for his insolence, and ordered him to withdraw from the capital which he had mercilessly pillaged and where his presence had

become odious. Daulatrao expressed his readiness to leave Poona, but pleaded his inability to do so until the arrears to his army had been paid up. At length the moment for Sindhia's seizure came, but Bajirao's courage failed him, and that golden opportunity of getting rid of his antagonist was missed solely through the weakness of the Peshwa. Thus did Bajirao evince that irresolution of character which marked him throughout his later career, and made him an object of universal contempt. Daulatrao was ordered to leave Poona with all possible haste. But in the meantime events occurred which rendered Sindhia's position rather precarious.

Mahadji, the grand-uncle of Daulatrao, had left behind him three widows whom their adopted son promised honourable maintenance. After his marriage with Baezabai, the promise was broken and even ordinary comforts were denied them. The widows in their discontent began to accuse Daulatrao of criminal intimacy with Mahadji's youngest widow, Bhagirathibai. This highly incensed Daulatrao, who ordered Shirzirao to settle amicably with them. But Ghatgay treated them insolently and even flogged them, and at last ordered them to be removed to Burhanpoor. The Shenwee Brahmans whose influence was waning through the rise of Shirzirao, enlisted their sympathy in the widows' cause. On the way to Burhanpoor, the whole escort was attacked by their partisans. The widows were delivered and placed in Amritrao's camp. Shirzirao enraged at the impudent interruption tried to seize the widows in the very camp of Amritrao, but failed. His attack was taken as a declaration of war between Sindhia and the Peshwa. Bajirao began to form alliances against Daulatrao. He gained over the Nizam and Holkar, though the latter owed his elevation to the gadi mainly to Sindhia. Alarmed at such a strong confederacy against him, Sindhia implored the English to intervene. The English agreed to interfere only on condition that Sindhia should make a fair settlement with his step-mothers; but the widows grew extravagant in their

demands, the settlement was not arrived at, and the mediation of the English was abandoned.. Sindhia then turned to Tipu in his difficulty; but Bajirao had anticipated him. Foiled in all his attempts he had only one way left to him; and that was the release of his prisoner, Nana, confined at Ahmudnagar. This step was considered by Daulatrao to be the most efficacious means he could take to strike terror deep into the heart of Bajirao. Nana was sent for from Ahmudnagar, of whom Sindhia asked an exorbitant ransom. At last a sum of ten lacs was agreed upon, and Nana was restored to liberty, though he was not allowed to proceed to Poona. The money was promptly paid to Daulatrao. This removed, though partially, one of the greatest difficulties of Sindhia. Bajirao soon after revoked his alliance with Nizamali and his other confederates and sought safety in treating with both Daulatrao Sindhia and Nana Phadnavis. Meanwhile Ghatgay had been carrying on his barbarous excursion in the neighbourhood. Daulatrao felt that the cruel acts of his minister were estranging the minds of his supporters. He therefore issued orders for Ghatgay's arrest, which was soon after effected, and Sindhia was at last reconciled to Bajirao.

The policy of the English in India had undergone a considerable change. The non-intervention policy which had characterized the career of Sir John Shore was abandoned by his successor the Marquis of Wellesley, who arrived in India on 26th April 1798. Soon after his assuming the reins of Government, Lord Mornington directed the English agents at the courts of Poona and Hyderabad to form alliances with those powers, so that their resources might not, in case of emergency, be employed against the English. The British agent at Poona recommended the Peshwa to reinstate Nana in the ministry and remove Sindhia, who formed an obstruction to such an alliance, from Poona. The reported invasion of Zaman Shah, King of the Afghans and grandson of Ahmedshah Abdali, a name

terrible to the Marathas, was urgently dwelt upon by the British agent to induce Daulatrao to repair to the North for the preservation of his dominions there; whilst he offered to the Peshwa a body of English troops for his personal protection, the restoration of his authority, and the revival of his government. Bajirao suspected that Nana was at the bottom of all these schemes. He most detested Nana, who occupied the uppermost place in his mind. Daulatrao publicly expressed his determination of proceeding towards Northern India, though Bajirao entreated him not to leave him exposed to the mercies of Nana, who was intriguing to afford a firm footing to the English in his dominions. At the same time Bajirao was using all the power of his cunning and dissimulation to appease Nana and implore him to assume the duties of administration. Nana Phadnavis declined to take any prominent part in public affairs until a guarantee was offered to him through the British agent for the security of his person and property. He also urged that Sindhia should leave Poona, and retire to his dominions. For securing the latter end, he generously advanced to Sindhia a further sum of 15 lacs of rupees from his private purse to facilitate his speedy return.

Bajirao saw with evident signs of consternation that Sindhia was engaged in right earnest in making preparations to leave Poona for his dominions in Malwa, and paid a secret visit to Nana at night in disguise. By means of his strange power of persuasion he was successful in deceiving, though Colonel Palmer denies this, the cautious Nana into a firm belief of his innocence in the affair of his imprisonment and the subsequent disgrace to which he was exposed. His purpose in imprisoning his partisans was, he said, simply to protect them from the clutches of the savage Ghatgay. Bajirao perceiving the desired effect produced by his eloquence, meant to heighten it. He swore by the sacred feet of Nana, upon which he laid his head in supplication, to look upon him as his own father, to obey his advice

to the very letter as a devoted child, and finally in a feigned burst of tears implored him not to abandon the Brahman government to the mercy of Maratha factions and the avarice of the aggrandising foreigners. Bajirao was one of those men whose thoughts and words bore no connection with each other, 'who never hesitate at an oath when they wish to seduce, who never want a pretext when they are inclined to betray.' Nana, deeply touched by this pathetic appeal of Bajirao, took him at his word, and resumed the duties of the Premier, without that guarantee through the English which he had formerly demanded with an eminent degree of foresight. Under these pleasing manners Bajirao concealed the ferocity of a tiger with the cunning of a fox; and when he perceived that Nana was unconsciously led into his clutches, he began to intrigue for the old man's destruction. He once more entreated Daulatrao to place Nana in confinement. The intrigue was soon divulged to Nana by his spies. He at once repaired to the palace and strongly reprimanded Bajirao for his base treachery, and most earnestly implored him 'not to plot against the life and freedom of an old man borne down by years, infirmity, and misfortune, but permit him to retire to some spot far from courts and camps, where his being suffered to exist could never interfere with any plans His Highness might form.' The Peshwa was a man who thought it madness to declare open hostilities against rivals whom he might destroy with perfect complacency. He protested against such an insinuation against his sincerity and feigned ignorance of any plot formed for his seizure. Nana, strange to to say, was easily satisfied and resumed the affairs of the government, though his suspicions were not entirely removed, and from that day Nana Phadnavis attended to those affairs only which necessarily required his supervision and guidance.

In September 1798 a subsidiary treaty was concluded between the English and Nizamali, by which the latter

promised to disband the French battalions he had raised under M. Raymond, and substitute in their stead a few English regiments. The English, on the other hand, declared their readiness to interfere in the pecuniary disputes between the Nizam and the Peshwa. When the Marathas came to know about this treaty, they grew jealous of their rival's enviable position, but when the English agent at Poona asked the Peshwa to enter into a similar alliance with the British power in India, Bajirao evaded it by a strong assurance that it was his firm intention to faithfully execute the existing engagements, and in the event of a long-feared war with Tipu breaking out, he promised the English agent to support them by providing a sufficiently strong contingent of his own. Nana, though he was now reconciled to the English, and though he often looked up to that power for personal safety, was still patriotic enough not to allow an English army to permanently establish itself in the very heart of Poona. In the answers given by the Peshwa to the English Resident, he was guided by his old minister's advice. But even after that, Nana strongly advised the Peshwa to stick to the promise given and not to break his faith with the English power. But there Bajirao was inexorable. Unscrupulous violation of pledges had become second nature with him. The last war between Tipu Sultan and the English was declared. At this time Nana advised Bajirao to send a Maratha contingent under Parshuram Bhow to co-operate with the English troops against Tipu. He gave no heed to Nana's advice and played false with the English. Even after hostilities had already commenced, the treacherous Peshwa continued to receive Tipu's envoys and gold, in spite of Colonel Palmer's protests. On receiving the intelligence of Tipu's death and the surrender of Shrirangapatan, however, the double-dealing Bajirao affected the greatest joy at such a brilliant termination of the campaign, and showed his mean spirit by explaining to the agent his coldness to the English as due to Nana.

The affairs of Sindhia were still involved in hopeless confusion. The revolt of the Báis, or, as Mr. Campbell[1] more appropriately terms it, "the Widows' War," had revived with full force. After the escape from Ghatgay's clutches they had taken refuge with the Rájá of Kolapoor. Their partisans, the Shenwee Brahmans, rallied round their standard and pillaged Sindhia's villages. Along with this Sindhia had to struggle against the inroads of Yeshvantrao Holkar. At this juncture Balloba Tatia was released by Sindhia, who promptly made an amicable settlement with the Báis. The Rájás of Kolapoor and Satara had long been waging war against the Peshwa's troops under Parshuram Bhow. In a skirmish he was killed; but his son Appa Saheb led his triumphant army to the very gates of Kolapoor and besieged the city. It was on the point of yielding when Appa Saheb, owing to the course of events at Poona, was forced to come to a speedy settlement, and Kolapoor was thus saved.

Such was the state of the Maratha Empire when a mighty spirit passed away. On the 13th March, 1800, Nana Phadnavis, whose health had been long declining, died at Poona "With him," says Colonel Palmer, "has departed all the wisdom and moderation of the Maratha government."

Nana Phadnavis, though he had married no less than nine wives, left not a single child behind him. Bajirao was so ungrateful a wretch that "even death was no asylum from his spite." Jivabai, Nana's widow, was imprisoned and her property seized and appropriated by the State. She was, however, released from that disgraceful situation by Yeshvantrao Holkar when he took possession of the city of Poona. She was not, however, secure of her safety until the year 1804, when by the intervention of the great Iron Duke, then General Arthur Wellesley, the unfortunate widow of the once powerful Phadnavis was allowed to live wherever

[1] Bombay Gazetteer, 'Poona'.

she liked, and an annual pension of Rs. 12,000[1] was conferred on her. Such was the magnanimity of those merchant princes from the West, deemed by Nana his greatest political foes!

We have come to the end of our narrative. Now we propose to devote the following pages to a short estimate of Nana's character. In doing this no subtle powers of analysis need be brought into requisition. Both the strong and the weak points of Nana lie on the surface. We need only be a little careful in striking the balance.

In person Nana was tall and thin. His complexion, as is described by various writers, was rather dark, while in his general demeanour he was grave. His look was 'intelligent, quick, and penetrating.'

Of him it has well been said that he was 'a great statesman condemned to watch the lingering agony of an exhausted empire, to tend it during the alternate fits of the stupefaction of raving which precede its dissolution, and to see the symptoms of vitality disappear one by one till nothing is left but coldness, darkness, and corruption.' Lord Mornington, soon after his death, wrote a letter of condolence to the Peshwa, in which the noble lord passed a befitting eulogium, dwelling in glowing terms on all the strong points of that veteran statesman:

"I have received with great concern the intelligence of the most lamented death of Balaji Pandit (Nana Phadnavis). The loss of persons distinguished for their talents, great qualities, and abilities is at all times a subject of regret. The melancholy news therefore of the death of Balaji Pandit, the able minister of your State, whose upright prin-

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[1] Pension from the British Government 12,000
Deshmukhi of Veral 500
Inam village of Mellowli 1,000
Mahajani and Khoteky of Vellass 200
13,700

ciples and honourable views, and whose zeal for the welfare and prosperity both of his own immediate superiors and of other powers were so justly celebrated, occasions extreme grief and concern. You must feel a peculiar degree of sorrow at his loss. Such, however, being the will of God, there is no remedy but patience and resignation. It therefore is incumbent upon you to acquiesce in the dispensations of Providence, to cease from unavailing grief yourself, and to endeavour to console others affected from the same cause."

Such an estimate coming from the pen of the eminent English statesman, speaks volumes in his favour. Even the great historian of the Marathas—Captain Grant Duff—is at times most ready and willing to give this Indian Machiavel his due. "The life of Nana," says he, "is entirely public." He faithfully represented the spirit of the people and of the age in which he lived; in fact, the spirit of the age was the stuff of which Nana was made. Open the pages of any Indian history for the period we have under consideration, and in every page of it you will find the name of Nana occurring. It is impossible that it should be otherwise. In him his contemporaries recognized the embodied spirit of their age. They began to look upon him as their own image, and as such they adored him; though they feared him, they admired if not loved him. In spite of this Nana could not maintain his supremacy to the day of his death. From the height of power to the lowest depth of degradation was but a step with him, and he whose word would have stood against the whole of India was in the declining years of his life reduced to such a plight that none was 'so poor to do him reverence.' And what was the reason which brought about his fall—the loss of power and greatness? Two chief defects contributed to his ruin. They were the defects of his nature, defects which could no longer be removed from the portrait of Nana than the 'wart from the portrait of Cromwell.' They were personal cowardice and inordinate ambition with unrestrained love of power.

The first, his personal cowardice, was in curious contrast with his political boldness. It was this trait in his character which cost him his premiership and with it all the influence that it commanded. When different factions were intriguing for supremacy after the death of Madhavrao II. and when Balloba Tatia was approaching at the head of Sindhia's army, he fled from Poona disregarding his friend Parshuram Bhow's advice to the contrary. From that day we date his political extinction; for though now and then he took an active part in the administration, it was much like a tool playing in the hands of his enemies, and though he eventually rose to his former post, it was the shadow, not the substance, of his previous power and influence.

The second great defect which blinded him to all the future consequences, which led him to adopt a policy that precipitated his fall, was 'his ambition, not always restrained by principle,' with fatal love of power. Nana occupied only a secondary position in the Maratha ministry until the murder of Narayenrao. He was instrumental in bringing about the accession of Madhavrao II. From that time he acquired supreme influence at the court of Poona. English writers attribute it to Nana's illicit connection with the Queen-Regent, Gungabai, though no hint of this scandal is to be found in the Maratha records. Whatever it may be, Nana never relaxed his firm hold, never allowed the young Peshwa, even when he grew up, any share in the administration. Such a shortsighted policy led to the suicide of the sensitive Peshwa and consequently to the fall of Nana. Though the policy adopted by him was strange and mistaken, it was natural. What the Earl of Warwick was among the English, the Saiyed brothers among the Mahomedans, Nana Phadnavis was among the Marathas. If history styled Warwick 'the King-maker' for his bringing about the accession of Edward IV. on the English throne, and the Saiyed brothers received the same appellation from Indian historians owing to their being instrumental in the accession

of Furrokhsiur and two of his successors, no less is Nana entitled to the same title for his having exalted Madhavrao II. to the Peshwa's masnud. And what wonder if, as a king-maker, Nana wielded the great power vested in his hand with haughtiness and arrogance. For

> "Who can contemplate Fame through clouds unfold
> "The star which rises over her steep, nor climb?"[1]

He shared in a large degree the faults of his age. India in his days was what Italy had been in the days of Machiavel. Fraud and hypocrisy marked every dominant character of those days—Sakharam Bapu, Mahadji Sindhia, Daulatrao Sindhia, Bájirao Peshwa, Hyder, Tipu, and Nizamali, and a host of other lesser figures. "Large promises, smooth excuses, elaborate tissues of circumstantial falsehood" had become their weapons, offensive and defensive. Nana from his very childhood was bred up in such a school of politics. With them all, the ends justified the means. Experience had taught Nana that manœuvring wisdom and duplicity were the true arts of governing. In matters which touched him directly and in the advancement of his personal interests he was of opinion that 'if the skin of the lion fell short, it should be eked out with the fox's.'[2]

Now we pass on to enumerate several sterling qualities and merits with which Nana was endowed. Patriotism —that great virtue of a noble mind—often influenced his actions. "During the latter unhappy years of his life, Nana was entitled to the highest praise of having acted with the feelings and sincerity of a patriot." If in him it was not the patriotism of a Hampden or a Sidney, it was at least marked by a deep sense of feeling for the community to which he belonged; for when pure selfishness and self-asserting propensities were rampant all around, his heart throbbed not for himself alone, but for others also who were placed by Providence under his care. Though Bajirao II.

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[1] Byron's Childe Harold.

[2] Lytton's Godolphin.

was one of his personal enemies, though he also feared destruction at his hands, yet in the hour of trial he honourably advised Bajirao to adopt such measures as he conscientiously believed to be advantageous to the whole State, without being in the least mindful of personal considerations. His feelings towards a foreigner were worthy of a real patriot. He boldly advised Bajirao to protest against the admission of an English contingent on the terms proposed by the Marquis of Wellesley. Nana, like a true patriot, was of opinion that local resources should be depended upon for the safety and protection of the State, and not the extraneous help of a foreign army. His attitude towards the English in general was not hostile at all. "He respected them, admired the sincerity of their character and the vigour of their government." After his release, when he was requested to resume the office of Prime Minister by Bajirao, he required of him a guarantee for his personal safety through the English Resident. With all this admiration, no one regarded the English with more jealousy and alarm when their political interests collided. As long as Nana was alive, the English could not make a subsidiary treaty with the Peshwa on the same basis as that on which they had effected it with the Nizam. Nana had the rare wisdom to perceive the ever-increasing influence which the English were obtaining, and he could foresee that eventually the English would become the masters of India. He predicted that the map of India would one day be covered over with red tint[1] emblematic of British supremacy. It was therefore Nana's constant endeavour to restrain the rising tide of English power; but his efforts were unavailing.

In those days of moral turpitude when no one man trusted another, it was necessary as well as customary to

[1] Ranjitsing of the Punjab and Hyderali of Mysore are said to have made a similar prediction. The latter is reported to have said, सब लाल होयगा, "Every thing will be red."

employ a host of spies in different courts to keep oneself acquainted with their ins and outs. Nana had a number of them who gave him timely intimation of any secret advantage which his political antagonists designed to take. So precise, regular, and timely was the intelligence communicated by the troop of spies he employed, that several marvellous feats are recorded of them. We propose to give one or two.

Malet, the Resident, once requested the Peshwa to allow the palanquins containing provisions for the English from Bombay to pass the Bore Ghaut unobstructed. Nana granted the request, warning them not to abuse the privilege. Accordingly he sent orders to the customs officers at Bore Ghaut to allow three palanquins containing provisions for the English to pass unchecked. This system went on smoothly for some time. Then Malet thought it unsafe to stay amidst the treacherous Marathas without a single gun for defence. He wrote to the Bombay Government to send a few small guns in one of the palanquins. That time out of the three, two only were loaded with provisions, and one—the red one which was locked—contained short guns. Of this Nana was at once informed by his clever detectives. He at once sent an express to Bore Ghaut to check the red palanquin. Malet asked an explanation. An interview between Nana and Malet was arranged. When the English envoy was brought before Nana, the astute minister said, 'Pray, Mr. Malet, think out yourself why, when the palanquins have been always allowed to pass free, this present one should be checked at Bore Ghaut?" Malet stood confused, and asked forgiveness for the breach of faith. But Nana was too inexorable, the red palanquin was sent back; and the English remained without guns for some time. Malet recorded in his minute: "As long as Nana remained supreme at the Poona court, they should never dream of obtaining a firm footing in the Maratha kingdom."

The following story is recorded in the Maratha Bakhars:

Once upon a time Nizamali was sitting all sad and disconsolate with his favourite wife Bahi Begum. She naturally asked her royal consort the reason of his depression. Thereupon he said: "There is no man in all my dominions worthy of my confidence: this makes me sad." The next day, when the Nawab was sitting in the harem with the same Begum, a note was found lying there, which appeared from its superscription to have come from Nana Phadnavis. The note ran thus: "Yesterday your Majesty was a little displeased for want of a single man worthy of your confidence in your State. Pray, ease yourself on that account. To me there is no difference between Your Highness and His Majesty the Peshwa. Look upon me as your own servant, and I shall very happily carry out your Majesty's orders." The Nizam was much astonished. But even walls had ears to convey the most secret intelligence to Nana. The Nizam was exceedingly pleased; and in recognition of his courtesy he in a public Durbar invested Nana with the exalted title of Madár-ul-Mahám (Prime Minister).

Nana Phadnavis was also endowed with an eminent degree of political prevision. He was strongly opposed to any change in the mode of conducting warfare which was the Marathas' own. From the early days of the great adventurer Shiwaji, war in Maharastra had a character peculiar to itself. "It is a fire which cannot be raked out; it burns fiercely under the embers: and long after it has to all seeming been extinguished, bursts forth more violently than ever." With the Marathas the principle was to make war maintain war. So early as the date of the battle of Panipat, when Nana was a young man of twenty, hardly experienced in military affairs, he saw the blunder which his friend Sadashivrao Bhow had committed in setting aside their traditional policy. This appears from a remark

in his autobiographical fragment[1]. And now when such veteran soldiers as Mahadji Sindhia, the great anti-type of Shiwaji, and his competitor Holkar were following a mistaken policy—as the results proved it to be—of having a few battalions officered and disciplined by French adventurers, Nana forestalled the evil consequences of the military policy each had adopted. He was aware that Maratha troops, however ably disciplined, would never be able to stand face to face with European armies in a regular battle. Their bands could cut off the enemy's communications, could attack and plunder their convoys, and thus starve them to death; but a victory over them in a pitched battle was an impossibility. This forecast of Nana was amply justified by the results of the campaigns that followed after his death. It was this change in their traditional policy that was instrumental in finally overthrowing the once powerful Maratha Empire.

In private life Nana Phadnavis was a man of great veracity, an exceptional trait of character among the Maratha Brahmans of the day. He was also very humane, charitable, and obliging; eminently frugal in all his dealings. He is said to have amassed an incredible amount of wealth without much dishonesty. The Maratha historians estimate Nana's wealth at what they call "Nav koti Narayan" (Nine crores, *i.e.* nine millions sterling.) In the course of our narrative we saw that he supplied Sindhia alone with so large an amount as 25 lacs of rupees. He also paid off the debts of Madhavrao I. We have already mentioned that Madhavrao had three objects uppermost in his heart when he was dying.[2] We have spoken of the first two which Nana promised, and strove his utmost to fulfil. The third object that pressed upon his heart was the payment of extensive debts which the Peshwa had incurred. Nana assured him that he would pay off all

[1] Vide *ante* page 6.

[2] Vide *ante* page 16.

his debts. Madhavrao was completely satisfied, but desired that the cheques and bills of exchange lying with the bankers in his name should be brought to him and disposed of in his very presence. Nana asked a friend of his to bring the papers from the bankers and get the whole debt amounting to nearly 25 lacs of rupees transferred to his name. This was at once done, and the dying Peshwa was gratified at the devotion of his faithful Nana. Now the question arises whence did he amass so large a fortune? Was it from the coffers of his master through dishonesty? Certainly not. History at least does not attach that stigma to his character. The financial condition of the Peshwa's treasury up to the time of Madhavrao Bullal was anything but prosperous. The kingdom was in fact steeped in debt from which it was gradually extricated under the able and economical régime of Nana. He had amassed such a vast amount of wealth from his own saving which was considerable owing to his great frugality.

His time was regulated with the greatest order and the business personally transacted by him almost exceeds credibility. Nana was exceptionally punctual in all his affairs, and he worked almost to the last with his usual strict order and punctuality. He in the words of Wordsworth,

"Still retained
"'Mid such abasement, what he had received
"From nature—an intense and glowing mind."

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